



# Early Childhood Education and Care Policies in the Republic of Korea

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# Executive Summary


1. Early childhood education and care in Korea has developed from separate kindergartens and childcare facilities with different historical origins. Kindergartens, a term referring to schools for children aged from three to five before entering elementary schools under the administration of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development, are the representative official early childhood educational institution in Korea. The first kindergarten in Korea was established in the late 19C, the National Kindergarten Curriculum was established in 1969 for the first time, and the first public kindergarten was established in 1976. Since 1983, superintendents of early childhood education have been assigned to the Ministry of Education and to the city and provincial committees of education. Starting from 1994, full-day kindergarten programs have been strongly advocated, and free education for 5 year-olds was legislated in 1997. Due to the rapid expansion of childcare facilities, kindergartens are currently at a stand still.
2. ‘Care’ for infants and young children in Korea was started in 1921 by Christian organizations and has been developed as a project for the promotion of child welfare since 1961. As the child rearing of working mothers became a serious social issue due to increase in women’s social participation in 1980s, the Ministry of Health and Welfare has taken charge of childcare nation-wide since 1991 and transformed ‘daycare’ into ‘childcare’, integrating education and care. In order to expand childcare facilities, the Korean government invested 1.3 trillion won (approximately 1 billion US dollars) from 1995 to 1997. As a result, there came to be about 20,000 childcare facilities. Several factors contributing to this rapid expansion were strong governmental will and financial support for children of low income families, more than 12 hours of childcare services throughout the year, a wider range of children to care for, and a report system rather than a licensing system for running childcare facilities.
3. The birth rate of Korea (1.3 births per woman) is the lowest among OECD countries and the divorce rate is increasing. As of 2002, women’s participation rates in economic activities were 49.8%, showing an ‘M’ shaped configuration with low participation of women between ages of 25 and 34. The greatest reason for women’s low participation is the child-rearing responsibility. There is a strong tendency of women giving up their job.

However, recently women's desire for social participation as well as men's desire for double income have been on the increase as well.

4. Although parental leave has been institutionalized and enforced since 1987, the number of individuals using it is low. In order to activate parental leave, societal foundations were set, including parental leave for male workers, parental leave allowance (300,000 won(\$250) per month), and protection against layoff during parental leave. In addition, personal tax deductions up to 1,500,000 won(\$1,250) are allowed for parents who send their children to kindergartens, childcare facilities, and Hakwons. Banks and other companies also provide tuition fees or childcare fees ranging from 50,000 won(\$41.67) to 100,000 won(\$83.33) for employees with young children.
5. As of 2002, there were a total of 8,308 kindergartens (4,219 national/public institutions and 4,089 private ones), 21,493 classes, 29,521 teachers and 55,150 children being educated in them. However, 78% of the enrolled children fall within the private kindergarten sector, of which the burden of finance falls on parents entirely. Kindergartens must gain permission of the Office of Education for their establishment, must use the national curriculum, and must be supervised. The minimum educational level for the qualification of kindergarten teachers is to graduate 2 year- and 4-year colleges.

As of 2002, there are 21,267 childcare facilities (1,294 national/public facilities and 19,973 private ones) with 770,029 infants and young children making use of their services. Since childcare facilities are welfare facilities, many children of low income families are enrolled in childcare facilities and working mothers favor childcare facilities because of their full day operation. Childcare facilities are not required for licensing, but need to report operations and the government is preparing to adopt an accreditation system in order to improve their quality. Childcare teachers may be graduates of high schools (24%), of 2-year colleges (59%), and 4-year colleges (17%), and 24% of them have a kindergarten teacher certificate.

6. While 59% of the 3- to 5-year-olds are enrolled in kindergartens or childcare facilities, 10% of the 0- to 2-year olds attend childcare. A breakdown of participation by age reveals



that 42.8% of 3-year-olds, 57.8% of 4-year-olds, and 68.7% of 5-year-olds are attending kindergartens or childcare facilities. Children up to the age of 4 attend childcare facilities more while 5-year-olds tend to attend kindergartens more. In order to increase participation rates, the Korean government supports childcare fees of children of low income families and provides free education to 5-year-olds as well as to children with special needs. Besides, there are approximately 510,000 young children attending private educational institutions called ‘Hakwon’. The participation rates of children in early childhood education and care are estimated to be over 90%, including children attending Hakwons.

7. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development(MOE) has been developing a series of policies to establish early childhood education in institutionalized public education. The concerns of the MOE include establishing an integrated system of education and welfare by providing both education and care to children, expanding educational opportunities for equal start, reconsidering the quality, fortifying the administrative system, and so on. The Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) are concerned with preparing policy plans to establish the basis for public childcare, client-oriented childcare, providing equal opportunities of childcare, reconsidering the quality, role-sharing between the government and the private sector, and so on. Besides, in order to increase women’s social participation, other ministries are concerned with childcare, such as the Ministries of Gender Equality, of Labor, of Government Administration and Home Affairs, and of Agriculture and Forestry.
8. As of 2002, the Korean government gave financial support totaling 7,966 billion won(\$6,638 million) with 3,666 billion won(\$3,055 million) to early childhood education and 4,355 billion won(\$3,629 million) to childcare. This government support takes up 0.13% of GDP. The central government and local authorities offer subsidies of 2,354 billion won(\$1,961 million) (29.8%) and 5,612 billion won(\$4,676 million) (70.4%) respectively. Childcare takes up 3.6% of the entire budget of the MOHW while early childhood education takes 1% of the total budget of the MOE. The budgets are expended on personnel wages (53.2%), direct subsidy to infant and child care (30.8%), and support of facility operation in order. Supports of personnel wages and facility operation are given directly to national/public kindergartens and childcare facilities whereas private



institutions are supported for teaching materials only. Thus, the burdens of education and childcare fees are great for parents whose children attend private institutions.

9. Statistics on early childhood education and childcare are separated by the administering government agencies. Annual Statistics on Education, published by MOE and KEDI, presents statistical information on early childhood education. Statistics on Childcare is investigated and published by MOHW to present childcare related statistics. Both statistical documents are available on the Internet. In addition, the related representative research institutes supported by the government are the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), the Korea Institute of Health and Social Affairs(KIHSA), and Korea Women's Development Institute (KWDI). KEDI carries out the MOE-supported research on early childhood education while KIHSA and KWDI undertake the MOHW-supported research on childcare. Unfortunately, there are only 1 or 2 researchers specialized in early childhood education or childcare in these national research institutes.
10. The Office of Government Policy Coordination(OGPC) and the Conference on Education and Human Resources Development function as a coordination and cooperation device among the government administration agencies. A council of ministers in the Conference have concurred that despite the fact that early childhood education and care creates a foundation for the development human resources in the future as well as the base of the nation, sharing of roles between the government and the market is unclear; weak links and collaboration among the ministries cause ineffective administration and financing; and early childhood education and care services do not meet parental needs. Therefore, ten ministries including MOE, MOHW, and MOGE formed the 'Special Steering Committee on the Development of Early Childhood Education and Care(ECEC)' and undertook an inter-ministerial policy research to establish plans. This project has significance in that officials in various ministries and researchers related to ECEC undertook the research collaboratively. This collaborative research brought expectations and prospects that 'early childhood education' and 'childcare' can develop together leaving the previous conflicts behind. 'Education' and 'care' for young children are taking their first steps together, hand in hand for the first time.



# Terminology

**Kindergartens** : Schools for educating children from age three to five (before entering elementary school). Their purpose is to promote the harmonious development of young children's minds and bodies by providing them with a proper educational environment.

**National/Public Kindergarten** : National/Public kindergartens are established and run by the national government, while public kindergartens are established and run by local authorities.

**Private Kindergarten** : Private kindergartens are established and run by legal or private organizations, subject to governmental regulation and supervision

**Childcare Facilities (Children's Houses)** : Facilities to provide care for young children aged under six before entering elementary school with requests from children's parents due to parental inability to take care of their children for their illness or work.

**National/Public Childcare Facilities** : Under the title 'Children's Houses,' these facilities established and run by the government and local authorities, and need to have more than 11 infants and young children enrolled at all times.

**Private Childcare Facilities** : Under the name 'Children's Houses,' these facilities are established and run by individuals, and need to have more than 21 infants and young children enrolled at all times. These do not include workplace childcare and family daycare.

**Family Daycare (Playroom)** : Under the title 'playrooms,' these are established and run by individuals at their homes or homelike environments and enrollment is limited to no fewer than 5 infants or young children and no more than 20.

**Employer Childcare** : Established and run by employing companies for the children of employees. These facilities are called as 'Children's Houses' if there are more than 5 infants and young children requiring childcare facilities.

**Hakwons (Learning Places)**: Run by individuals and learning places in which knowledge, skills, and arts are taught to the number of students designated by the presidential decree. Hakwons must run for a minimum 30 days with an established curriculum. Most 'Hakwons' for young children teach art, playing the piano, gymnastics, as well as Korean language fundamentals and arithmetic.



# I Social Contexts



# Social Contexts

## **1.1. A History of Early Childhood Education and Care in the Republic of Korea<sup>1)</sup>**

Since early childhood education and care in the Republic of Korea have different historical roots, the history of the two will be described separately.

### **Education for Young Children<sup>2)</sup>**

Education for young children in Korea has developed mainly through kindergartens, the representative official educational institution for children aged three to five (before entering elementary school).

The first kindergarten in Korea was established by the Japanese in 1897 during the colonial period. It was in 1913 that Koreans established a kindergarten for their own children for the first time. In 1914, a college-affiliated kindergarten was established by an American missionary and in conjunction with it, a department for kindergarten teacher training was also established.

The regulations for kindergartens were established in 1922 for the first time and were included later in educational laws established in 1949. In 1969, the National Kindergarten Curriculum was developed by the Ministry of Education. Like the national curricula of elementary, middle, and high schools, it has been regularly revised every five years. The sixth National Kindergarten Curriculum is currently in use.

The first public kindergarten was established in 1976. The government 'Policy for the Development of Early Childhood Education' in 1981 brought a remarkable increase in the number of public as well as private kindergartens. Thus, there came to be 1,927 public kindergartens established, typically in agricultural areas, and 1,023 private kindergartens,

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1) This section is taken from the UNESCO publication: Na, J., & Moon, M.(2003). Integrating Policies and System for Childhood Education and care: The Case of the Republic of Korea, Unesco Early Childhood and Family Policy Series Number 7: Paris, France

2) Excerpted from 'Kindergarten Education Resources' by the Ministry of Education (1998).

mostly in cities. Accordingly, departments of childcare were established in junior colleges to train prospective kindergarten teachers.

With the *Early Childhood Education Promotion Act* in 1982, ‘Saemaul Nursery Schools’ were founded under the supervision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Saemaul Nursery Schools integrated the co-op nurseries under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, Children’s Houses under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and daycare in the farming season under the Office of Rural Development. In 1983, the Ministry of Education and local education authorities came to have early childhood superintendents. The main task of early childhood superintendents was to regulate the quality of education provided to children by both public and private kindergartens. Currently, early childhood superintendents are assigned to local education authorities (i.e., city, county, district).

In 1991, by a presidential decree, Saemaul nursery schools were required to transform themselves into kindergartens or childcare facilities, and the Ministries of Education and of Welfare took over the work of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. As the numbers of childcare facilities which provide services for more than 12 hours a day were increased by the Ministry of Welfare in 1990s, kindergartens came to include ‘care’ in their programs. In this context, the Ministry of Education urged kindergartens to provide full-day programs, and about 80% of kindergartens are currently running extended-day or full-day programs.

Free early childhood education for one year before formal schooling was legislated in 1997, and put into practice in the fall semester of 1999. As of 2002, about 26,000 five-year-old kindergarteners from low-income families receive free education benefits.

Compared to the remarkable expansion of childcare facilities, kindergarten facilities are at a standstill. As of 2002, 550,000 children are enrolled in a total of 8,308 kindergartens including public and private ones.

### **Care for Young Children <sup>3)</sup>**

Care for young children in Korea was started in 1921 by Christian organizations. For 50 years after, care for young children has been considered mainly as a form of relief for very poor families. It was thus named ‘daycare’, ensuring a minimum of safety and the basic

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3) Excerpted from ‘Guideline for Childcare’ by the Ministry of Health and Welfare(2000).

needs of socially disadvantaged children.

Childcare facilities in Korea were developed as part of the child welfare project. In 1961, the *Child Welfare Act* was established. As the number of women in the work force increased in the 1980s, the rearing of children by working mothers became a serious social issue. The Ministry of Labor initiated employer childcare by the *Equal Employment Act* in 1987 and the Ministry of Health and Welfare carried out childcare projects in 1989.

Since several administrative authorities implemented childcare policies with little coherence, women organizations tried to integrate childcare into a more unified form by proposing the establishment of ‘*Child Care Act*’ in 1991. Since then, the Ministry of Health and Welfare has taken charge of childcare nation-wide, and transformed ‘daycare’ into ‘childcare’, integrating education and care.

In order to expand childcare facilities, the government invested 1.3 trillion won(\$ 1 billion) from 1995 to 1997. As a result, the number of childcare facilities has increased tenfold, reaching about 20,000 facilities. However, the number of young children enrolled in childcare facilities increased 15 fold, reaching 734,000 children. Several factors contributed to this rapid expansion, including strong governmental will and financial support; an increase of clients who needed their children to be cared for more than 12 hours a day throughout the year; a wider age range of children to serve (i.e., from birth to pre-school age); and a report system rather than a licensing system for running childcare facilities.

Childcare facilities are basically for children and parents with difficulties in family care, such as children of low-income families and of working mothers. Thus, childcare facilities are required to have an environment and programs for full-day care. In addition, childcare teachers are college graduates specialized in early childhood education, child welfare, or related fields, and those who completed childcare teacher training.

In 1997, kindergarten associations proposed one year of ‘free education’ before entering elementary school to the National Assembly. In 2002, ‘free childcare’ has been provided to about 87,000 5-year-old children of low-income families. Currently, about 770,000 children are enrolled in 21,267 childcare facilities in nation-wide including national/public, private and workplace facilities in Korea.

As previously mentioned, ‘education’ and ‘care’ for young children in Korea have

developed from separate sources. In the beginning, while kindergartens were focused on educating children by running half-day programs, childcare facilities were based on daycare for infants and children. Since the 1990s, kindergartens have run full-day programs by including 'care' and childcare facilities have tried to provide 'education' in addition to care. In short, kindergartens and childcare facilities in Korea are becoming similar to each other, providing children with education and care in an integrated way.

## 1.2. Perspectives on Young Children

Some representative Korean perspectives on young children are reflected in prenatal education, age calculation, old sayings, and so on (Yoo, A., 1983).

Traditionally, education in Korea was considered to start from the prenatal period. That is, parents needed to educate their unborn child during pregnancy, considering an embryo as a human being. The essence of 'prenatal education' was that both mother and father are good in their words and deeds because parental deeds, words, and diets are thought to influence their unborn child.

Contemporary prenatal education, compared to traditional, is carried on in different ways such as listening to classic music like Mozart, reading books, and the consumption of high-protein foods in the belief that this will make babies more intelligent.

For a long time, Koreans have included ten months of the prenatal period in calculating ages. In 'Korean age', a newborn child is considered to be already one year old, and becomes a two-year-old after his/her first birthday. So, there is one-year difference between Korean and Western ages. The Korean age proves that Koreans cherish unborn children as human beings and the ten months of the prenatal period as the first year of child's life.

In addition, there is the well-known Korean old saying that 'Habits at three continue until eighty.' This old saying demonstrates that Koreans have long realized the importance of age three for the education of their children. Right up to the present day, Korean parents have remained concerned with forming their children's basic everyday life habits, and in providing early learning experiences as their children reach the age of three.

Since the mid 20C, Koreans have used the term, 'child' (A-Li-Ni), and May 5th of every year has been celebrated as the 'Children's Day.' The word for 'children' is an abbreviation of 'young people' and connotes respect for children. 'Children' is an official

term to indicate children before adolescence in Korea.

The primary child caregivers in Korea have been changing. Korean grandparents used to play an important role in the education and care of young children before the industrialization of society because extended, large families prevailed. In particular, the first-born boy, who would succeed the family lineage, was taken a special care of. However, nuclear families became dominant types of Korean families after industrialization and mothers came to bear the prime responsibility for child-rearing. With the increasing number of working mothers and decreasing birth rates, the traditional preference of boys has diminished to a considerable extent. As of late, it has been increasingly recognized that the child-rearing responsibility must be shared between mothers and fathers as well as between the government and parents.

Korean parents' high aspirations of their children's education have long been acknowledged domestically and internationally as a key to the successful educational development in Korea. High educational aspiration of Korean parents, however, came to be blamed as the cause of serious educational problems and societal burdens. Deeply rooted in Korean cultural values of academics and the current college-entrance-oriented education system, many Korean parents tend to be obsessed with their children's academic achievements and spend enormous portion of their income on their children's private education. Unlike the past, Korean parents' educational aspiration for their children, today, is considered more negative rather than positive, often labelled as, "excessive" or "distorted" educational aspirations. In this context, many young Korean children learn Korean language fundamentals, English, and arithmetics in private academies called "Hakwon" far before formal schooling.

### **1.3. Demographic, Social, Economic Trends**

#### **1.3.1. Population**

##### **1) Total Population and Population Structure by Age**

As of 2002, the total population of South Korea was 45,985,000. There were 23,068,000 males (50.2%) and 22,917,000 females (49.8%) (Korea National Statistical Office, 2002).

Breaking down the population distribution by age, youth population comprises 6.8% and the elderly one make up 7.3%. Currently, Korea is in the beginning stage of a demographic transition towards an elderly society. The elderly population in Korea is rapidly increasing due to low birth rates and extended average life spans.

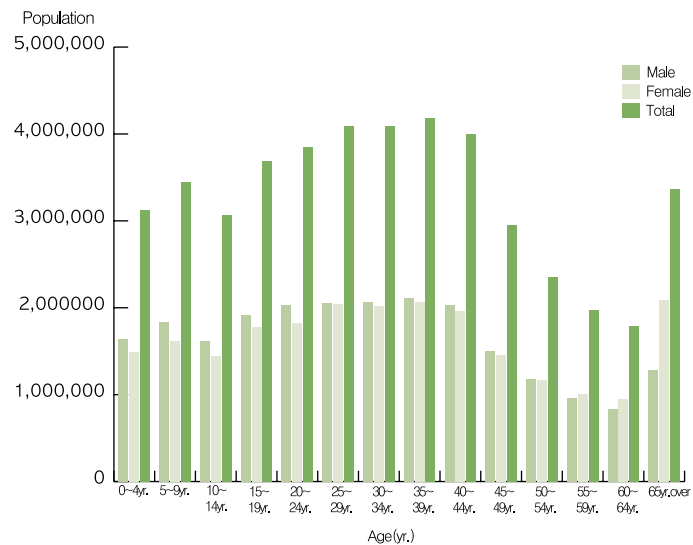


&lt;Table I-I&gt; Population by Age (2002)

(unit: people)

Age range	Male	Female	Total(%)
0-4	1,641,166	1,489,092	3,130,258 (6.8)
5-9	1,831,446	1,612,610	3,444,056 (7.5)
10-14	1,615,013	1,449,429	3,064,442 (6.7)
15-19	1,913,885	1,777,699	3,691,584 (8.0)
20-24	2,028,206	1,819,980	3,848,186 (8.4)
25-29	2,057,321	2,039,657	4,096,978 (8.9)
30-34	2,068,202	2,025,026	4,093,228 (8.9)
35-39	2,117,492	2,069,461	4,186,953 (9.1)
40-44	2,029,413	1,966,923	3,996,336 (8.7)
45-49	1,496,104	1,455,919	2,952,023 (6.4)
50-54	1,185,239	1,165,011	2,350,250 (5.1)
55-59	959,680	1,008,792	1,968,472 (4.3))
60-64	836,465	952,384	1,788,849 (3.9)
Above 65	1,287,397	2,084,409	3,371,806 (7.3)
Total	23,068,181	22,917,108	45,985,289 (100.0)

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Survey of Korean Population.



&lt;Figure I-I&gt; Population Structure by Age

## 2) Rates of Birth and Rates of Death

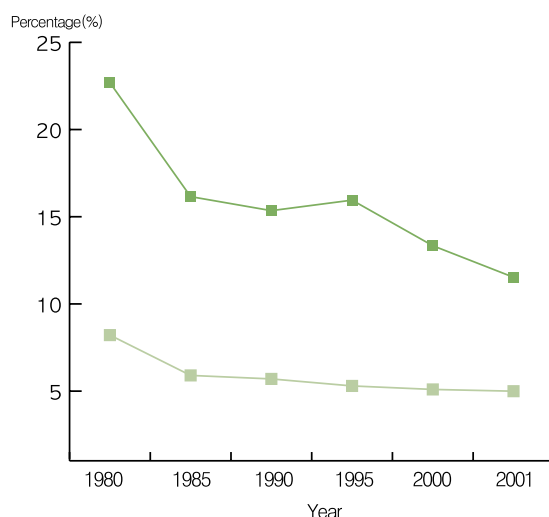
Birthrates have been decreasing in post-1980s Korea. Women between the ages of 15 and 49 continue to bear fewer children, resulting in a continual decrease over the years. In 1992, there were 1.78 births per woman, 1.47 births per woman in 2000, and 1.33 births per woman in 2002. According to the OECD, this is the lowest birthrate statistic of any country.

On the other hand, through advancements in the medical sciences and improved standards of living, the rate of human deaths continues to decrease and life expectancy continues to increase. For Koreans, the life expectancy is at 75.9 years, breaking down as 72.1 years for males and 79.5 years for females (Korea National Statistical Office, 2002).

<Table I-2> Birth Rates and Death Rates

	unit: %					
Rate/Year	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001
Birth	22.7	16.2	15.4	16.0	13.4	11.6
Death	8.3	6.0	5.8	5.4	5.2	5.1

note: Birth rate=annual numbers of newborns/annual population  $\times$  1000  
 Death rate= annual numbers of the deceased/annual population  $\times$  1000  
 Birth/death rates are calculated by dividing the total number of births or deaths by the population for a given year, but both rates are expressed as numbers per thousand.  
 Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Population Variation by Year



<Figure I-2> Birth rates and Death Rates

### 3) Causes of the Decrease in Birthrate

There are a number of different reasons for the decrease in birthrates in Korea including the rising cost of education, the decreased dependence of parents on children upon reaching old age, the rise in the age of marriage, and the increased participation of women in society (The Federation of Korean Industries, 2002).

- ① High cost of education : The main reason for the decreased birthrate involves the financial burden of educating the child. Other reasons include an unreliable public school system, a society sectionalized by academic achievement, and the distorted fervor of parents for education.  
 \* According to a survey by the Korea National Statistical Office (2000), 72.5% of Koreans responded that the cost of education was a burden, with extracurricular work fees mentioned by 56.0%, followed by the high cost of tuition, mentioned by 37.9%, being the primary and secondary reasons respectively for this burden.
- ② The decreased dependence on children of parents upon reaching old age: Changes in beliefs about filial duties, better ability of parents to care for themselves, and trends encouraging preparatory measures for the later years of life contribute to the decline in the bearing of children.
- ③ The rising age of marriage: Importance placed on self-realization above and beyond marriage, increased involvement of women in mainstream society, and the increasing demand for higher education have raised the age of giving birth to one's first child in addition to decreasing the number of births per woman.  
 \* Statistics from the year 2001 state that, overall, men were married at the age of 29.6 and women at the age of 26.8, far older than in the past.
- ④ Increased economic participation of women : The increased levels of child bearing evasion or the prolonging of the childbearing process is a result of the rise in the educational status of women, the increased demand for the participation of women in society, and the burden of tuition fees.

### 1.3.2 Economic Levels

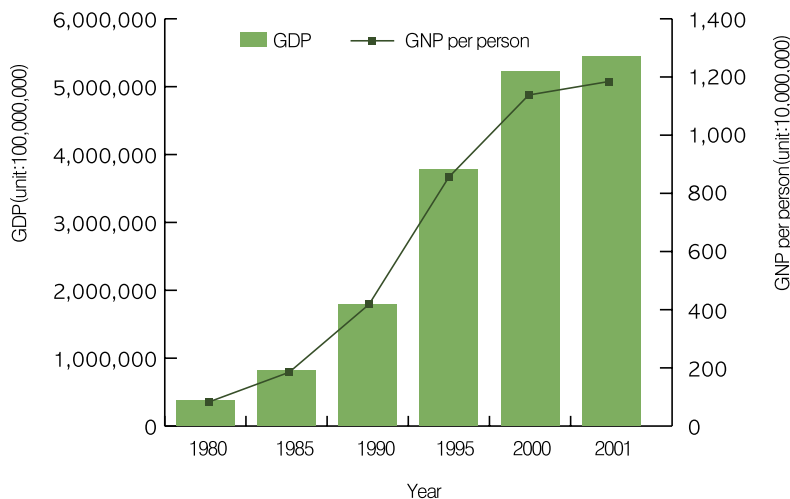
Beginning in the 1980s, Korea has shown surprising economic growth. In 1990, there was a 9% growth in the economy which received attention from the entire world. This rapid economic growth is the main cause of Korea's ability to join OECD.

However, the financial crisis in 1997 led to placing the Korean society under the guidance of the IMF for 3 years. Currently, the Korean economy is affected by the world economy which is going through a phase of sluggishness and inactivity.

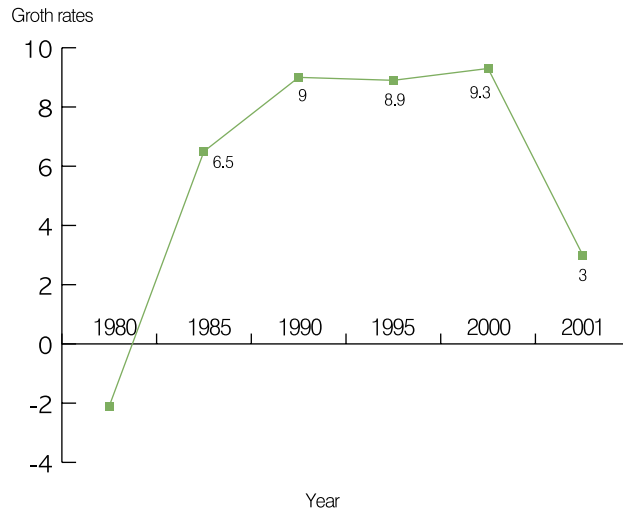
<Table I-3> GNP, GDP

unit: GNP(\$8.50), GDP(\$85,000), %						
Classification	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001
GDP	377,885	813,123	1,787,968	3,773,498	5,219,592	5,450,133
GNP/1person	97	194	417	835	1104.6	1148.8
Economic growth rates	-2.1	6.5	9.0	8.9	9.3	3.0

Source: The Bank of Korea(2002). Annual Indicators of the National Account



<Figure I-3> Annual GDP and GNP per person



&lt;Figure I-4&gt; Economic Growth Rates

### 1.3.3 Hours of labor and participation rates

#### 1) Hours of labor

The year 2002 showed a long average workweek of 45.9 hours. The hours are longer, the levels of education are lower, and more hours of labor are required for women when considering work within the industrial and manufacturing sectors.

&lt;Table. I-4&gt; Leading Average Weekly Work Hours by Industrial Sectors (2001 Statistics)

		unit : hours	
Sections	Working time	Sectors	Working time
Technology Industry	47.0	Transportation, & Telecommunications Industry	49.1
Mining Industry	43.8	Finance, Insurance, Service Industry	45.2
Manufacturing Work	48.3	Food & Lodging Industry	45.1
Natural Resource Industry (Electricity, Gas, Water) Industry	49.1	Public and Private Service	45.0
Construction Industry	44.3	Overall Average	45.9

Source: Korea National Statistical Office

<Table. 1-5> Employment Rates Based on Academic Achievement and Gender (2001 Statistics)

unit : 1,000 people

Classification		Under element. school	Middle school	High school	College	Total
1-17hrs.	M	77	45	98	45	265
	F	92	40	150	83	365
	total	170	85	248	127	630
18-35hrs.	M	181	113	241	97	633
	F	313	136	308	140	897
	total	495	249	549	237	1,531
36-44hrs.	M	310	241	834	707	2,093
	F	521	253	702	516	1,993
	total	832	494	1,536	1,223	4,085
45-53hrs.	M	320	379	1,584	1,278	3,561
	F	494	318	955	578	2,346
	total	814	697	2,539	1,857	5,907
More than 54hrs.	M	579	795	2,985	1,428	5,787
	F	812	670	1,348	365	3,195
	total	1,391	1,465	4,333	1,793	8,982
Temporal Leave	M	14	24	51	39	128
	F	18	13	32	37	3,195
	total	32	36	83	75	227
Total	M	1,483	1,597	5,794	3,594	12,467
	F	2,251	1,430	3,494	1,719	8,895
	total	3,734	3,027	9,288	5,313	21,362

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Annual Population for Economic Activities

## 2) Increases in economic participation

Currently, in the year 2002, 61.8% of the adults over the age of 15 are part of the work force. For women, the percentage participating in the workforce is 49.8%. Around 664,000 were listed as unemployed, with an unemployment rate of 3%.

<Table 1-6> Participation in Economic Activities by Gender

unit: 1,000 people, %

Classifi- cation	Above 15yr-olds	Population for Econ. Act	The Employed	The Unemployed	Participation Rates of Econ. Act.
Male	17,885	13,324	12,219	384	74.5
Female	19,007	13,324	9,280	189	49.8
Total	36,891	22,793	22,219	573	61.8

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Population participated in Economic Activities by Gender

### 3) Increases in economic participation by women

Nearly 78% of the women in the work force are married, and there is evidence indicating that this percentage is on the increase.

<Table I-7> Women's Employment Rates by Marital Status

unit: 1,000 people, %

Classification	1985	1990	1995	2000
Single (%)	25.2	24.5	25.2	22.2
Married(%)	74.8	75.5	74.9	77.8
Total	5,833	7,376	8,256	8,707

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Women's Employment Rates by Marital Status.

The reality for women is that academic background will dictate impact on the workforce. The lower a woman's academic achievement, the more likely it is for the woman to work in sales and services or in agriculture and forestry. The probability that the woman will work in fairly simple, even manual, jobs will thus increase. On the other hand, the higher her academic achievement, the better her opportunities to work as a professional and in an office.

<Table. I-8> Patterns of Women's Participation in Economic Activities by Education (2001)

unit: 1,000 people

Classification	Middle sch. & under	High sch.	College	Total
Administrator/ manager	2	11	18	32
Professional	1	47	547	595
Technician/ Para-professional	13	240	339	593
Clerical Worker	73	738	479	1,290
Services	909	909	121	1,890
Sales	555	555	165	1,615
Agriculture & Fishery	877	877	4	952
Manual Technician	379	379	16	591
Assembly Worker	150	150	9	311
Physical Laborer	722	722	22	1,026
Total(%)	3,682 (41.4)	3,494 (39.3)	1,719 (19.3)	8,895 (100.0)

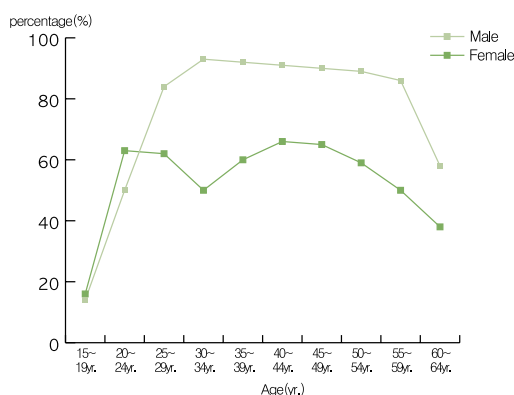
Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Annual Population of Economic Activities

The participation of women in the work force continues to show an “M” shaped distribution, sagging between the age of 25 and 34..

<Table I-9> Rates of Women Participation in Economic Activities

Ages	unit: %					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001
20-24	53.5	55.1	64.6	66.1	60.8	61.5
25-29	32.0	35.9	42.6	47.8	55.9	57.7
30-34	40.8	43.6	49.5	47.5	48.5	48.8
35-39	53.1	52.9	57.9	59.2	59.1	59.5
40-44	56.7	58.2	60.7	66.0	63.4	63.4
45-49	57.3	59.2	63.9	61.1	64.6	64.2

Source: Korea Women’s Development Institute(2002). Annual Statistics on Korean Women .



<Figure I-5> Population Rates of Economic Activities by Gender

The attitudes of women entering into the workforce and the child-rearing responsibilities imposed on women are the greatest reasons for the “M” shaped configuration. There is, according to statistics from the year 2002, a great similarity between the number of women over the age of 15 desiring to enter the work force prior to marriage and those who do so after the growth of their children. Obviously, there are a large number of women desiring to



continuously have occupations. However, there is a higher number of women who will put their work on hold in order to raise their children age zero to five before entering school.

<Table I-10> Koreans' Attitudes toward Women's Employment

unit: %

Classification		House Keeping Through out	Prior marriage	Until having the first child	After the growth of child	Before marri.& After raising	Working through out	Don't know	Popu. Over 15yr-old
Sex	M	11.6	13.1	8.4	15.0	25.2	23.1	3.7	100.0
	F	8.5	10.3	6.7	14.0	27.6	30.4	2.6	100.0
Education	Elem.	17.4	15.3	6.7	12.2	20.2	22.7	5.3	100.0
	Middle	8.7	12.3	7.1	14.4	24.0	29.5	4.0	100.0
	High	7.9	10.6	8.1	16.5	28.6	26.1	2.1	100.0
	College	7.0	8.7	7.7	12.6	31.6	30.5	1.8	100.0
Marital Status	Unmarried	5.4	11.8	8.5	6.5	23.8	39.3	4.7	100.0
	Married	10.5	11.2	7.3	18.4	28.7	21.9	2.0	100.0
Pre-sch. Child	Have	9.6	9.1	6.8	20.1	31.9	20.7	1.9	100.0
	Don't have	10.1	12.3	7.7	12.9	24.9	28.5	3.5	100.0
Total		10.0	11.6	7.5	14.5	26.4	26.8	3.1	100.0

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Attitudes Toward Women's Employment

<Table I-11> Hindering Factors in Women Employment

unit: %

Classification		Societal bias	Lack of Job conscio-usness	Lack of compet-ence	Unequal employ. Condition	Burden of child rearing	House-keeping	Other	Total
Sex	Male	28.2	10.0	4.3	12.5	29.3	10.6	5.2	100.0
	Female	27.6	8.1	4.0	13.0	31.4	10.8	5.0	100.0
Education	Under Elemt.	22.7	7.5	3.8	9.6	28.0	16.6	11.9	100.0
	Middle Sch.	30.6	8.7	4.5	14.2	23.8	11.9	6.3	100.0
	High Sch.	29.7	10.5	4.4	13.3	30.5	8.9	2.7	100.0
	College	28.8	13.1	4.4	12.3	34.2	5.9	1.3	100.0
Age	15-19 yrs.	36.2	9.9	4.3	15.8	17.2	7.4	9.1	100.0
	20-29 yrs.	33.2	10.6	3.6	15.1	27.8	6.7	3.0	100.0
	30-39 yrs.	25.4	10.2	4.5	11.2	39.3	7.4	2.0	100.0
	40-49 yrs.	28.3	11.1	5.2	12.5	25.8	13.9	3.1	100.0
	50-59 yrs.	26.4	9.8	4.7	12.5	28.4	13.7	4.6	100.0
	60 yrs. above	21.0	7.4	3.4	8.1	29.8	16.8	13.6	100.0

Occupation	Management	28.5	14.3	11.7	4.7	32.9	6.4	1.5	100.0
	Clerical	29.9	12.8	14.3	4.2	30.6	6.6	1.6	100.0
	Service	28.0	9.9	12.8	4.8	30.2	11.2	3.1	100.0
	Farming& Fishery	22.9	10.0	12.3	4.5	29.3	11.7	4.1	100.0
	Technician	28.3	10.0	112.3	4.5	29.3	11.7	4.1	100.0
	Manual Labor	28.2	10.0	4.3	12.5	29.3	10.6	5.2	100.0

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Hindering factors in women employment by sex, age, educational level, and occupation

### 1.3.4 The rationale behind participation in the workforce

It is very important to note that, presently, over 20% of Koreans live in a double-income environment. There is also an increase in the number of women who desire to work regardless of marriage or family. Statistics from the year of 2002 present that the desire for women to work “regardless of marriage and family” was the highest.

According to the study of Kim, Y., et al (2001), 30% of the respondents felt that “the male needs to be responsible for the livelihood of the family”; at the same time, 54% reported that this is not necessarily true. Thus, there is an increase both in the desire by males for a double income home as well as by women themselves for participation in the workforce.

## 1.4. Support for Child Rearing

The system of parental leave has been institutionalized and enforced since 1987. However, people using this system were few. Thus, in order to activate this system, societal foundations were set, including parental leave for male workers, the establishment of a parental leave allowance, and protection against layoff during parental leave. These foundations were created and institutionalized beginning in November of 2001. More specifically, an extension was established for parents with children aged zero to five. In addition, maternal leave is provided for women during the pregnancy term and at the time of birth. During the time of leave, payments of 200,000 won(\$166.67) per month (300,000 won(\$250) per month beginning in the year 2003) are offered. After this period of leave, individuals are allowed to return to the

work place under the same circumstances prior to the leave, in regard to the wages and the work. This arrangement was made available for male workers as well.

In the year 2002, 20,000 parents were estimated to have taken parental leave and an estimated 35,700 million won(\$29,750,000) was set aside for payment. In actuality, only 3,309 took this leave resulting in the payment of 2,590 million won(\$2,158,333) and there were only 65 males using the parental leave. For the year 2003, the Ministry of Labor decreased their estimate of the numbers taking parental leave to 10,000 individuals (Ministry of Labor, 2002). According to the Federation of Korean Trade Unions (2002), in order to activate the system of parental leave, “a raise in parental leave payments,” “reinstatement guarantee rules,” and the “security of work transfer” must be ensured.

Furthermore, personal tax deductions are allowed for parents who send their children to kindergartens, childcare facilities, and Hakwons. In the year 2002, tax deductions range from 1,000,000 won(\$833.33) to 1,500,000 won(\$1,250) per child.

Besides, banks and other companies provide tuition fees or childcare fees for employees whose children are younger than the elementary school entrance age, with payments from 50,000 won(\$41.67) to 100,000 won(\$83.33).





# **II The current state of early childhood education and care**



# The current state of early childhood education and care

## 2.1 Administrative Agencies

The Ministry of Education & Human Resources Development (henceforth, HRD)<sup>1)</sup> and the Ministry of Health and Welfare are currently in charge of the education and care of children from three to five years old. The Ministry of Education & HRD takes responsibility for children between the ages of three and five while the Ministry of Health and Welfare takes responsibility for children from birth to five years of age.

### 2.1.1. Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development

Within the Ministry of Education and HRD, the Early Childhood Education Division currently heads early childhood education. After the establishment of a division that should take responsibility of early childhood education in 1983, the special education and early childhood education groups worked as special sub-committees within the Ministry of Education & HRD until 2001. However, a separate division with sole responsibility for early childhood education was created as a result of the increase concerns in establishing early childhood education as part of institutionalized public education and the operation of free education for five-year-old children. The major tasks of the Early Childhood Education Division are as follows : 1) the establishment of basic policies regarding the promotion of early childhood education, 2) the provision of early childhood education as public education, 3) the provision of tuition free kindergartens, and 4) support for the establishment and management of the early childhood education institutions.

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1) The MOE has been changed as MOE & HRD since January 2001.

### 2.1.2 The Ministry of Health and Welfare

The Childcare and Education Division within the Ministry of Health and Welfare is responsible for care for infants and children. This is a new division, created in May of 2002. Prior to this time, care for infants and children was dealt with in conjunction with other childcare related tasks by the Department of Child Welfare. The creation of the child care and Education Division shows the significance of the heightened interest of the present government in childcare as well as the higher priority given to childcare by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. It was founded in correspondence to the Early Childhood Education Division in the Ministry of Education. The major tasks of the Childcare and Education Division include : 1) the establishment and mediation of comprehensive plans for childcare, 2) establishment and revision of the *Child Care Act* and related laws, 3) investigation and research on childcare, 4) the establishment and delivery of governmental subsidy standards, 5) financial support and fund-raising for childcare facilities, 6) support for childcare fee payments for children five years and younger targeting low income families as well as children with special needs, 7) the establishment of standards for special childcare facilities (for various circumstances, including the facilities for infants, children with special needs, after-school hours, and extended hours), 8) the training of childcare staff, qualification management, and in-service training, 9) the development and delivery of standardized childcare curriculum and various programs, 10) the support and supervision of the central and local childcare information centers.

### 2.1.3 The Participation of Other Ministries

In addition to the Ministries of Education & HRD and of Health and Welfare, the Ministries of Gender Equality, of Labor, of the Government Administration and Home Affairs, and of Agriculture and Forestry are also directly and indirectly involved in the education and care for young children. The involvement of these various Ministries is derived from a great interest in heightening the level of participation by women in the labor market, and easing women's responsibility for child rearing. The divisions of the various ministries involved in education and care for young children are the Office of Policy Development and Evaluation of the Ministry of Gender Equality, the Gender Equality Policy Division of the Ministry of Labor, the Office of Policy on Women of the Ministry of

Government Administration and Home Affairs, and the Office of Policy on Women of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry.

## 2.2 The Early Childhood Education and Care Services

Currently, the representative early childhood education and care institutions in Korea are kindergartens and childcare facilities under the administration of the Early Childhood Education Division of the Ministry of Education and HRD, and of the Child Care and Education Division of the Ministry of Health and Welfare respectively. There are also private academies called Hakwon [Learning Places], which many Korean young children attend; however, kindergartens and childcare facilities will be focused on here since they are official institutions of early childhood education and care.

<Table 2-1> ECEC Services in Korea

Admin. Agency	Ministry of Education		Ministry of Health and Social Welfare				
Name of ECEC Institution	Kindergarten		Childcare Facilities (House of Children, Play Room)				
Types of ECEC Services by the establisher	National/ Public	Private	National Public	Private	Work places	Home	
Age Range of Children Served	3 to 5		0 to 5				

### 2.2.1. Kindergartens

Kindergartens are the ‘schools’ for educating children from the age of three to five, functioning according to educational laws concerning elementary and secondary schools and according to the *Early Childhood Education Promotion Act*. As of 2002, there were 8,308 institutions, 21,493 classes, 29,521 teachers and 550,150 children being educated in them. There are 4,219 public kindergartens, making up 50.8% of the total with 4,089 private ones comprising 49.2%. Thus, there are more public than private kindergartens. However, 72% of the classes, 79% of the teachers and 78% of the enrolled children fall within the private kindergarten sector.



&lt;Table 2-2&gt; The Current State of Kindergartens

Unit: Numbers of Kindergartens, Classes, Children, %

Classification	N. of Kindergartens	N. of Classes	N. of Teachers	N. of enrolled children			
				3yr-old	4yr-old	5yr-old	Total
Total	8,308 (100)	21,493 (100)	29,521 (100)	74,635 (100)	172,376 (100)	303,139 (100)	550,150 (100.0)
National /Public	4,219 (50.8)	6,012 (28.0)	6,243 (21.1)	7,990 (10.7)	25,639 (14.9)	86,003 (28.4)	119,632 (21.7)
Private	4,089 (49.2)	15,481 (72.0)	23,278 (78.9)	66,645 (89.3)	146,737 (85.1)	217,136 (71.6)	430,518 (78.3)

Source: Early Childhood Education Division, Ministry of Education &amp; HRD(2002).

The Current State of Kindergarten(2002. 4. 1.)

Farming and fishing communities have the highest proportion of children in public kindergartens (33.3%), exceeding that of children living in small cities (12.2%) and that in the large cities (5.3%). In farming and fishing communities, many also attend private kindergartens (6.3%), though this percentage is significantly larger in the small to medium cities (18.6%) and the large cities (24.3%). This is due to the expansion of public kindergartens for farming and fishing communities in 1980s.

&lt;Table 2-3&gt; The Current State of Kindergartens by Regions and Funding Source

unit: N. of kindergarten (%)

Classification		Total	Large Cities	Middle/ small cities	Rural & Fishery Com.
N. of kindergartens	Total	8,308 (100)	2,458 (29.6)	2,556 (30.8)	3,294 (39.6)
	National/Public	4,219 (50.8)	438 (5.3)	1,014 (12.2)	2,767 (33.3)
	Private	4,089 (49.2)	2,020 (24.3)	1,542 (18.6)	527 (6.3)

Source: Early Childhood Education Division, Ministry of Education &amp; HRD(2002).

The Current State of Kindergarten (2002. 4. 1.)

Since most of the public kindergartens are affiliated to elementary schools, they have only one to two classes, with 70.3% having only one class and 21% having two classes.

Private kindergartens are usually separate from other institutions, and usually comprise more classes, with 29.6% having four to five classes, 23% having three classes, 19.4% having two classes, and 18.3% having six classes or more.

<Table 2-4> The Current State of Kindergartens by the Number of Classes

unit: N. of Kindergarten (%)

<i>Type</i>	Total	1class	2classes	3classes	4-5 classes	6-10 classes	More than 11classes	Temporally closed
Total	8,308 (100.0)	3,301 (39.7)	1,683 (20.3)	1,187 (14.3)	1,378 (15.7)	737 (8.9)	31 (0.4)	61 (0.7)
Nationalu/ Pb-lic	4,219 (100.0)	2,967 (70.3)	888 (21.0)	242 (5.7)	96 (2.3)	19 (0.4)	1 (0.1)	6 (0.2)
Private	4,089 (100.0)	334 (8.2)	795 (19.4)	945 (23.1)	1,212 (29.6)	718 (17.6)	30 (0.7)	55 (1.4)

Source: Early Childhood Education Division, Ministry of Education & HRD(2002).  
Current Status of Kindergartens (2002. 4. 1.)

The percentage of kindergartens dividing their classes by age is 73.1, while 26.9% of the kindergartens mix different ages in their classes. Many of the latter public kindergartens, combining various age levels in one class, target the farming and fishing communities. This is because the number of children within these areas is smaller, thus do not require the formation of more classes. As for single-age group classes, those for five-year-olds appear to have the greatest number of students enrolled.

<Table 2-5> Single-age and Mixed-age Kindergarten Classes

unit: N. of classes (%)

Classification	Total	3yr-old	4yr-old	5yr-old	Mixed-age
Total	21,493(100)	2,723(12.7)	4,717(21.9)	8,279(39.0)	5,774(26.9)
National/Public	6,012(28.0)	123(0.6)	302(1.4)	1,748(8.1)	3,839(17.9)
Private	15,481(72.0)	2,600(12.1)	4,415(20.5)	6,531(30.4)	1,935(9.0)

Source: Early Childhood Education Division, Ministry of Education & HRD(2002).  
Current Status of Kindergartens (2002. 4. 1.)

Of the 4,089 private preschools, 3,185 of the schools, making up 77.9% of the total, are schools set up and run by private individuals. Those sponsored by religious organizations make up 12.8% of kindergartens, while only 7.4% of the preschools are sponsored by the public sector.

&lt;Table 2-6&gt; Types of Private Kindergartens by Establishment

unit: N. of kindergarten (%)

Classification	N. of Kindergartens	N. of Classes
Incorporated organizations	304(7.4)	1,327(8.6)
Religious Organizations	522(12.8)	1,666(10.8)
Individual	3,185(77.9)	12,195(78.8)
Military & others	78(1.9)	293(1.9)
Total	4,089(100.0)	15,481(100.0)

Source: Early Childhood Education Division, Ministry of Education &amp; HRD(2002).

Current Status of Kindergartens (2002. 4. 1.)

There is a tendency for kindergartens to operate on a half day basis. However, there are an increasing number of schools that offer extended care for 5-8 hours or care for children all day long, making for more than 8 hours of care a day. Out of a total of 8,308 schools, 4,240 (51%) offer these extended services while 2,458 (30%) offer all day care. Accordingly, schools with half day programs take up merely 19% of the total. Public schools in the farming and fishing districts are more likely to offer extended care while private schools in the big cities are more likely to offer care all day long.

&lt;Table 2-7&gt; Extended- and Full-day Kindergartens

unit: N. of Kindergartens (%)

Classifi-cation	Extended			Full-day		
	Total	National/Public	Private	Total	National/Public	Private
Total	4,240(100.0)	2,466(58.2)	1,774(41.8)	2,458(100.0)	856(34.8)	1,602(65.2)
Large Cities	932(22.0)	109(2.6)	932(22.0)	1,197(48.7)	159(6.5)	1,038(42.2)
Small Cities	1,192(28.1)	546(12.9)	1,192(28.1)	600(24.4)	186(7.6)	414(16.8)
Rural/ Fishery Com.	2,116(49.9)	1,811(42.7)	2,116(49.9)	661(26.9)	511(20.8)	150(6.1)

Source: Early Childhood Education Division, Ministry of Education &amp; HRD(2002).

Current State of Kindergartens (2002. 4. 1.)

### 2.2.2 Childcare Facilities

Childcare facilities serve children from birth until entrance into elementary schools, providing the basic infant care guaranteed by regulations.

As of 2002, 21,267 institutions with 770,029 children are using the childcare services. Of these, 1,294 institutions at 6.1% are public with an amazing 93.9% using private facilities.

However, individuals working in the private sector may also receive aide from the public sector, increasing the numbers to 16.1% with 3,426.

<Table 2-8> The Current State of Childcare Facilities

unit: N. of Facilities and Children (%)

Classification	N. of Facilities	N. of Staff	N. of Infants and Children		
			0 - 2yr-old	3yr -old & Over	Total
Total	21,267 (100)	88,504 (100)	177,554 (100)	592,475 (100)	770,029 (100.0)
National/Public	1,294 (6.1)	10,669 (12.1)	23,184 (13.1)	79,672 (13.4)	102,856 (13.4)
Private	19,973 (93.9)	77,835 (87.9)	154,370 (86.9)	512,803 (86.6)	667,173 (86.6)

Source: Childcare and Education Division, Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002).  
Current state of childcare facilities

Of the total, 88% of the childcare facilities are located in the cities, with 43.4% in the large cities, 44.8% in the small cities, and 11.8% in farming and fishing communities.

<Table 2-9> Childcare Facilities by Region

Classification	Large Cities	Small Cities	Rural & Fishery Com.	Total
No. of Childcare Facilities (%)	9,213 (43.4)	9,534 (44.8)	2,520 (11.8)	21,267 (100.0)

Breaking down childcare establishments according to their types, private facilities are largest proportion at 48%. Thus, the largest number of parents seek childcare services from private facilities, making up 53%.

<Table 2-10> Types of Childcare Facilities and Numbers of Children Enrolled

Classification	Total	Private						
		National/ Public	Sub total	Legal Corporation.	Incorporated private organizations	Individual	Workplace	Home (Playroom)
N. of Facilities(%)	21,267 (100.0)	1,294 (6)	12,311 (58)	1,618 (8)	514 (2)	10,179 (48)	195 (1)	7,467 (35)
N. of Facilities(%)	770,029 (100.0)	102,856 (13)	574,570 (75)	140,273 (18)	27,916 (4)	460,381 (53)	8,398 (1)	84,205 (11)

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002). Statistics on Childcare.

Childcare facilities generally operate on a small scale. Overall, the greatest segment, comprising 35.4%, of the facilities have less than 20 children with those having 31 to 39 (19.7%) next, followed by those with 20 to 30 children (17.1%). However, public facilities tend to operate on a larger scale. Childcare facilities of between 66 and 91 children take up 35.3% of the total, followed by those with 40~65 individuals (29.4%) and then those of 92~117 children (14.0%). Private facilities have 31~39 children at the most, and 98.6% of family daycares have fewer than 19 children.

<Table 2-11 > The Current State of Childcare Facilities by Numbers of Infants and Young Children

unit: N. of child(%)

	No of Infacts and Children									
	Total	1 ~ 19	20 ~ 30	31 ~ 39	40 ~ 65	66 ~ 91	92 ~ 117	118 ~ 144	145 ~ 171	More than 172
Total	21,267 (100.0)	7,535 (35.4)	3,641 (17.1)	4,191 (19.7)	1,992 (9.4)	1,869 (8.8)	996 (4.7)	512 (2.4)	240 (1.1)	291 (1.4)
National Public	1,294 (100.0)	6 (0.5)	26 (2.0)	67 (5.2)	380 (29.4)	457 (35.3)	181 (14.0)	104 (8.0)	40 (3.1)	33 (2.5)
Private	12,311 (100.0)	144 (1.2)	3,476 (28.2)	4,067 (33.0)	1,580 (12.8)	1,387 (11.3)	804 (6.5)	403 (3.3)	198 (1.6)	252 (2.1)
Work- place	195 (100.0)	26 (13.4)	31 (15.9)	57 (29.2)	32 (16.4)	25 (12.8)	11 (5.6)	5 (2.6)	2 (1.0)	6 (3.1)
Home	7,467 (100.0)	7,359 (98.6)	108 (1.4)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002). Statistics on Childcare.

Childcare facilities generally operate for a total of 12 hours a day. Overall, 85.6% of the facilities operate for 8-12 hours, 11.6% of the facilities operate for more than 13 hours, and 2.8% of the facilities operate for less than 8 hours. Most of the facilities are open for 12 hours on average, making this set of hours the norm.

<Table 2-12> Running Hours of Childcare Facilities

Classification	unit : N. of Facilities(%)				
	Less than 8hrs.	9 - 12hrs.	More than 13hrs	Total	Average
N. of Facilities	304	9,283	1,258	10,845	11.4
(%)	(2.8)	(85.6)	(11.6)	(100.0)	

Source: Seo, M., Rhim, Y., & Park, A. (2002), National survey of childcare facilities in the year of 2002. Ministry of Health and Welfare & Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs

## 2.3. Participation

### 2.3.1. Kindergarten

It was in the 1980s that many children at age from 3 to 5 came to attend kindergarten in Korea. At that time, the government had a strong will for early childhood education and expanded public kindergartens in farming and fishing communities.

<Table 2-13> Annual Changes in Numbers Enrolled in Kindergartens

Statistic/ year	unit: N. of Kindergartens, Children, %					
	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2002
N of children	64,433	549,790	589,223	529,052	544,771	550,150
3-5yrs-old						
Total	7.3	33.0(21.1)	42.4(31.0)	27.1	26.1	27.8
Enrollment rates(%)						

note: The number in the parentheses of the year of 1985 & 1990 present the number of kindergartens excluding Saemaul Nursery Schools.

As of 2002, 550,150 children, making up 27.8% of the eligible child population between the ages of three to five years were enrolled in kindergartens. Beginning at age three, the

number of children entering kindergartens increases with age, with about half of the children entering kindergarten being 5 years old.

<Table 2-14> Kindergarten Enrollment Rates by Funding and by Age

unit: N. of child, %

Classification		3yr-old	4yr-old	5yr-old	Total
N. of eligible children		634,557	665,305	679,751	1,979,613
N. of enrolled children	Total National/ Public Private	74,635(3.8)	172,376(8.7)	303,139(15.3)	550,150(27.8)
		7,990(0.4)	25,639(1.3)	86,003(4.3)	119,632(6.0)
		66,645(3.4)	146,737(7.4)	217,136(11.0)	430,518(21.7)

Source: Early Childhood Education Division, Ministry of Education & HRD(2002). The Current Status of Kindergarten(2002. 4. 1.)

Of the 550,150 children enrolled in kindergarten, 233,910 children live in the cities, comprising 42.5% of the total, while 100,501 children, making up 18.3%, are enrolled in kindergartens in farming or fishing communities.

<Table 2-15> Kindergarten Enrollment by Regions

Classification	Large Cities	Small Cities	Rural & Fishery Com	Total
N. of children(%)	233,910 (42.5)	215,739 (39.2)	100,0501 (18.3)	550,150 (100.0)

Source: Ministry of Education & HRD and Korean Educational Development Institute(2002). Annual Statistics on Education

### 2.3.2. Childcare

Along with an increase in the number of childcare facilities, the number of children seeking these facilities has also increased. In 1980, there were 42,394 infants enrolled, 293,747 in 1995, and 770,029 in 2002. As of 2002, 20.7% of the children between the ages of zero to five use childcare services prior to entering elementary school.

<Table 2-16> Annual Changes in children Enrolled in Childcare Facilities

Classification/year	1980	1990	1995	2000	2002
N. of infants and children	42,394	48,000	293,747	686,000	770,029
Coverage rates for 0-5yr olds (%)			7.4	17.3	20.7

Source: Childcare and Education Division, Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002). The Current Status of childcare Facilities

There are 177,544 children between birth and two years of age, receiving childcare services, making up nearly 10% of the total group of that age. The percentage of uptake for childcare facilities by age group is as follows : 0.6% at 0 years, 2.6% at 1 year, and 6.9% at 2 years. There are 592,475 children receiving childcare services between the ages of three and five, taking up 30.6% of the total population. Broken down by age group, that yields 30.8% of the total population of three year olds in childcare, 31% of four year olds, and 23.6% of five year olds. While three and four years old children's enrollment in childcare facilities continually increases, five-year-old children's enrollment drops significantly.

<Table 2- 17> Enrollment Rates in Childcare Facilities by Age of Children And by Funding Source

unit: %(1,000 children)

Classification	Under 1 yr	1yr-old	2yr-old	Total	3yr-old	4yr-old	5yr-old	6yr-old & beyond	Total
National/ Public	1,096 (0.2)	6,371 (1.1)	15,717 (2.5)	23,184 (1.3)	25,405 (4.1)	27,298 (4.3)	22,577 (3.4)	4,392	79,672 (4.1)
Private	8,216 (1.4)	39,578 (6.6)	106,576 (17.3)	154,370 (8.7)	167,121 (26.7)	171,340 (26.7)	135,453 (20.2)	38,889	512,803 (26.5)
Total	9,312 (1.6)	45,949 (7.7)	122,293 (19.8)	177,554 (10.0)	192,526 (30.8)	198,638 (31.0)	158,030 (23.6)	43,281	592,475 (30.6)
Total Population	566,388 (100.0)	598,585 (100.0)	617,346 (100.0)	1,782,319 (100.0)	624,032 (100.0)	642,011 (100.0)	671,651 (100.0)		1,937,694 (100.0)

Source: Korea National Statistical Office(2002). Estimates of Future Population



Among those seeking childcare in the cities, 155,497 children are between the ages of 0~2, 452,657 children are between the ages of 3~5 with a total of 608,154. This makes up 83.7% of the total population of children enrolled in childcare facilities. In the fishing towns and villages, 22,057 of children in childcare are between zero and two years of age, 96,537 are between three and five years of age, for a total of 118,595 between the ages of zero and five. This makes up only 16.3% of the total population of children enrolled.

<Table 2-18> Numbers of Infants and Children Enrolled in Childcare Facilities in Cities and Rural and Fishery Communities

Classification	Cities	Rural & Fishery Com.	unit : N. of child(%)
			Total
0 - 2 yrs.	155,497(87.6)	22,057(12.4)	177,554(100.0)
3 - 5 yrs.	452,657(82.4)	96,537(17.6)	549,194(100.0)
Total(0 - 5 yrs)	608,154(83.7)	118,594(16.3)	726,748(100.0)

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002). Statistics on Childcare.

### 2.3.3. The integration of infant education and childcare participation

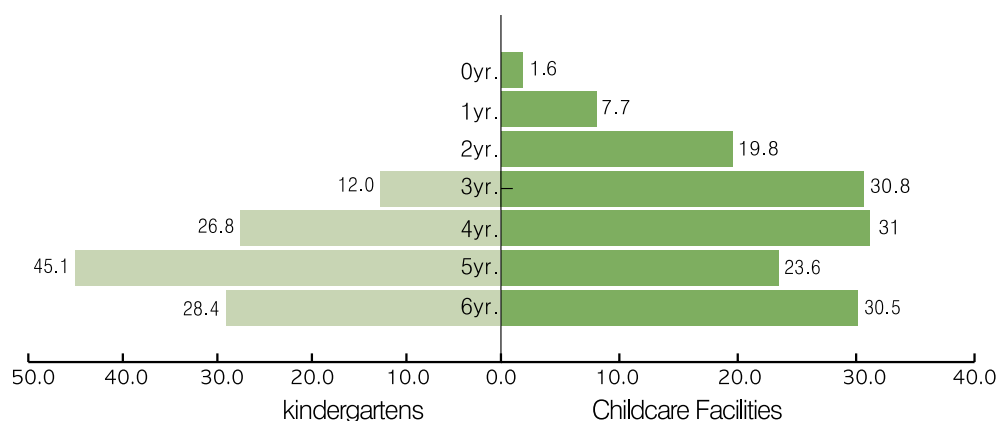
While 59% of the 3-5 year olds attend kindergartens or childcare facilities, 10% of the children ages 0-2 use childcare facilities. A breakdown of participation by age reveals that 42.8% of three-year-olds, 57.8% of four-year-olds, and 68.7% of five-year-olds are in attendance. When both age and type of participation are into consideration, children up to the age of four attend childcare facilities more while five-year-olds tend to attend kindergartens more often.

<Table 2-19> Numbers of Infants and Children Enrolled in Kindergartens and Childcare Facilities

unit: % (N. of child)

	Classification	Under 1yr	1yr-old	2yr-old	Total	3yr-old	4yr-old	5yr-old	6yr-old & over	Total
Kindergarten	National/Public	-	-	-	-	1.3	4.0	12.8		6.2
	Private	-	-	-	-	10.7	22.8	32.3		22.2
	Sub total	-	-	-	-	12.0	26.8	45.1		28.4
Childcare Facilities	National/Public	0.2	1.1	2.5	1.3	4.1	4.3	3.4	(4,392)	4.1
	Private	1.4	6.6	17.3	8.7	26.7	26.7	20.2	(38,889)	26.5
	Sub total	1.6	7.7	19.8	10.0	30.8	31.0	23.6	(43,281)	30.6
Ratio of children enrolled		1.6	7.7	19.8	10.0	42.8	57.8	68.7	(43,281)	59.0
Ratio of children unenrolled		98.4	92.3	80.2	90.0	57.2	42.2	31.3		41.0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0		100.0
Population		(566,388)	(598,585)	(617,346)	(1,782,319)	(624,032)	(642,011)	(671,651)		(1,937,694)

Source: Korea National Statistical Office (2002). Estimates of Future Population; Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002), Annual Statistics on Childcare; Ministry of Education & HRD & Korean Educational Development Institute (2002). Annual Statistics on Education.



<Figure 2-1> Enrollment Rates of Kindergartens and of Childcare Facilities by Age

### 2.3.4. Others, including Hakwons

As of 2002, about 510,000 young children attend private educational institutions, called 'Hakwons' (learning places) in Korea (Ministry of Education and HRD & Korean Educational Development Institute, 2002). Hakwons teach children Korean language fundamentals, basic mathematics, playing the piano, art, and so on. It is difficult to figure out the exact numbers of children attending Hakwons because many children attend kindergartens or childcare facilities along with Hakwons. Thus, ECEC participation rates in Korea can be very different depending on whether to include participation rates in Hakwons or not. If children's participation in Hakwon is included, ECEC participation in Korea reaches over 90%. If not, ECEC participation in Korea is only 59%.

In 2001, the Assembly approved the educational functions of Hakwons. Nevertheless, Hakwons are excluded in recipient institutions of ECEC free education for five-year-olds voucher. This implies that Hakwons are not considered as an official ECEC institution in Korea and thus, are not eligible for financial support from the government

### 2.3.5. The ECEC participation of Korea in the OECD educational indicators

The status of ECEC in Korea is lowest amongst all nations in the OECD countries in terms of educational indicators. Indeed, the OECD has made an example of Korea to present countries of lowest ECEC participation (OECD 1996, 2000). However, it is only fair to note that a major reason for this is the number of kindergartens in Korea. The reason for this is the different factors being requested by the OECD with regard to early childhood education, as follows:

'The inclusion of care-only facilities in the statistics of childcare programs due to the differences in traditional practices when dealing with the care of young children has greatly affected the results. ... It is difficult to differentiate between educational services and custodial care facilities for all nations. Also, approaches of each nation to education for young children is very different.' (OECD 1996).

The educational indicators by the OECD follow the International Standard Classification of Education set by UNESCO in 1997. There is a considerable possibility to include

childcare facilities into ECEC participation defined by OECD, considering following; the difference between education and care, institution-based early childhood education the range of children's age, and teacher qualification and training programs presented by the ISCED.

Additionally, it is worth examining the private academies called 'Hakwons'. In general, there is a need to understand ECEC participation in Korea from a more comprehensive perspective.

## 2.4 Staff

### 2.4.1. Kindergarten Staff

There are 29,673 staff involved in kindergarten education with 3,248 (10.9%) directors, 712 (2.4%) assistant directors, 6,868 (23.1%) grade 1 teachers, and 18,623 (62.8%) grade 2 teachers. The reason for the comparatively small number of kindergarten directors is that many primary school principals carry out the dual roles of kindergarten director and principal. Besides, in many private kindergartens, the director carries out both director and associate director duties. Since an assistant director is not necessary for kindergartens with less than three classes, there is a small number of assistant directors.

<Table 2-20> The Number of Kindergarten Staff by Qualification

unit: N. of staff(%)

Type	Director	Assistant. director	Grade 1 teacher	Grade 2 teacher	Para teacher	Nurse teacher	others	Total
Total	3,248 (10.9)	712 (24.0)	6,868 (23.1)	18,623 (62.8)	11 (0.0)	48 (1.2)	163 (0.5)	29,673 (100)
National/ Pub-lic	55 (0.8)	307 (4.8)	4,592 (7.2)	1,436 (22.4)	2 (0.0)	4 (0.1)	3 (0.0)	6,399 (100)
Private	3,193 (13.7)	405 (1.7)	2,276 (9.8)	17,187 (73.8)	9 (0.0)	44 (0.2)	160 (0.7)	23,274 (100)

Source: Ministry of Education &HRD and Korean Educational Development Institute (2002). Annual Statistics on Education.

College graduates make up 99.8% of kindergarten teachers, though 70% are graduates of 2-year colleges and only 30% are graduates of 4-year universities. In public kindergartens, 66% of the teachers graduated from 4-year universities, almost twice the percentage of 2-year college graduates. On the other hand, 80% of the private kindergarten teachers are

graduates of 2-year colleges. A big difference in educational level of kindergarten teachers resides in the fact that entrance into the public kindergarten sector requires selection as a public official, whereas private schools tend to hire 2-year college graduates who are less of a financial responsibility for their employers.

<Table 2-21> Kindergarten Teachers by Educational Level

unit : N. of Teachers (%)

Classification	Under High School	2 yr College	4 yr College & Over	Total
National/ Public	18(0.3)	1,897(33.9)	3,673(65.7)	5,588(100)
Private	40(0.2)	15,515(80.6)	3,693(19.2)	19,248(100)
Total	58(0.2)	17,412(70.1)	7,366(29.7)	24,836(100)

Source : Ministry of Education & HRD, & Korean Educational Development Institute (2002). Annual Statistics on Education.

Kindergarten teachers with five years experience or less make up 64.5% of the total. The rest of the teachers have an average of 10 years experience. Public kindergartens that are fully established have more teachers with more experience while private kindergartens with great financial responsibility have a greater number of inexperienced teachers at 80%.

<Table 2-22> Kindergarten Teachers by Teaching Experience

unit: 1,000(%)

Classification	Less than 5 yrs	5-10 yrs	10-20 yrs	20-30 yrs	More than 30 yrs	Total
Total	750(13.4)	620(11.1)	3,920(70.2)	298(5.3)	0(0.0)	5,588(100)
National/ Public	15,268(79.3)	3,460(18.0)	508(2.6)	11(0.1)	1(0.0)	19,248(100)
Private	16,018(64.5)	4,080(16.4)	4,428(17.8)	309(1.2)	1(0.0)	24,836(100)

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002). Statistics on Childcare

#### 2.4.2. Childcare Staff

There are 88,504 staff working in childcare facilities with 21,066 (23.8%) directors, 26,195 (30.0%) grade 1 & 24,059 (27.2%) grade 2 childcare teachers. A total of 22,532 (23.6%) childcare teachers have kindergarten teacher certificates, including 4,135 people working in the public facilities and 18,387 working for private ones.

<Table 2-23> Childcare Staff by Qualification

unit : No. (%)

Classification	Total	Director	Grade 1 Teacher	Grade 2 Teacher	Doctor	Nurse	Nutritionist	Clerk	Cook	Driver & others
Total	88,504 (100.0)	21,066 (23.8)	26,195 (30.0)	24,059 (27.2)	252 (0.3)	526 (0.6)	389 (0.4)	1,061 (1.2)	8,325 (9.4)	6,631 (7.5)
National /Public	10,669 (100.0)	1,282 (12.0)	5,375 (50.4)	1,803 (16.9)	44 (0.4)	106 (1.0)	45 (0.4)	141 (1.3)	1,434 (13.4)	439 (4.2)
Private	63,682 (100.0)	12,393 (19.5)	19,180 (30.1)	18,293 (28.7)	205 (0.3)	414 (0.7)	340 (0.5)	886 (1.4)	6,372 (10.0)	5,599 (8.8)

Source: Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002). Statistics on Childcare

Childcare teachers who have attained 4-year university degrees or above comprise 16.6% of the total, while 59.2% are 2-year college graduates and 24.2% are below the high school graduate level. Therefore, teachers who graduated from 2 or 4 year colleges make up 75% of the total. On the whole, childcare teachers working within the public sector are comparatively higher in qualifications than those the private sector.

< Table 2-24> Childcare Teachers by Education Level

unit : No. (%)

Classification	Total	High School or Lower.	2 yr-College	4 yr-College & Higher
National/Public	3,310(100.0)	530(16.0)	2,009(60.7 )	771(23.3 )
Incorporated organizer	5,267(100.0)	511(9.7)	3,713(70.5)	1,043(19.8)
Social Org.	291(100.0)	74(25.5)	154(52.9)	63(21.7)
Private	13,233(100.0)	3,850(29.)	7,556(57.1)	1,827(13.8)
Workplace	282(100.0)	43(15.3)	128(45.7)	111(39.0)
Home	3,224(100.0)	1,189(36.9)	1,588(49.3 )	447(13.9)
Total	25,607(100.0)	6,197(24.2)	15,148(59.2)	4,262(16.6)

Source: Seo, M., Rhim, Y., & Park, A. (2002), National Survey of Childcare Facilities in the Year 2002. Ministry of Health and Welfare & Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs

Childcare teachers having over five years of experience comprise 53.2% of the total, with the largest segment (33.7%) being those with 5~10 years.

<Table 2-25> Childcare Teachers by Teaching Experience

unit : No.(%)

Classifi-cation	Less than 5 yrs	5 ~ 10 yrs.	10 ~ 20 yrs	20 ~ 30 yrs	Total
National/ Public	61 (43.6)	67 (47.9)	12 (8.6)	-	140 (100.0)
Private	124 (59.6)	70 (33.7)	14 (6.7)	-	208 (100.0)
Total	185 (53.2)	137 (39.4)	26 (7.5)	-	348 (100.0)

Source: Korea Women's Development Institute(2002). Diversification of Childcare Facilities and Development of Childcare Infrastructure

## 2.5 Coordination and Cooperation Devices among Administrative Agencies

### 2.5.1. Office for Government Policy Coordination(OGPC)

The Office of Government Policy Coordination under the Office of the Prime Minister helps the Prime Minister to coordinate, direct, supervise, and evaluate administration of each central government agency. Under the Minister of Office of Government Policy Coordination, there is the Assistant Minister for Social and Cultural Policy Coordination. Under the Assistant Minister for Social and Cultural Policy Coordination, there are Officers of Welfare and Labor and of Education and Culture.

In late 1997, the OGPC set and operated the Committee of Early Childhood Education Reform under the Commission of Educational Reform in order to create a consensus between those working in the field of early childhood education and those in the field of childcare regarding the 'Plan for Establishing Early Childhood Education into Institutionalized Public Education'. After several conferences, the Ministries of Education and HRD and of Health and Welfare as well as the fields of early childhood education and childcare agreed to the Plan. This agreed Plan was passed as Assembly Bill No. 18 on December 30, 1997.

### **2.5.2. Conference of Education and Human Resources Development**

The Conference of Education and Human Resources Development is a coordinating agency for planning a comprehensive and systematic policy for human resources. In January of 2001, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (HRD) was launched and the Human Resources Development Act (Resolution No. 6713) was enacted in August of 2002.

The chair of the Conference is the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and HRD. The members of the Conference are twelve officers at the ministerial level, including the Ministers of Government Administration and Home Affairs, Science and Technology, Culture and Tourism, Commerce, Industry, and Energy, Information and Communication, Labor, Gender Equality, Planning and Budget, Office for Government Policy Coordination, Government Information Agency, and Head Secretaries of Education and Culture, and of Policy Planning. The executive secretary of the Conference is the Assistant Vice-Minister of Education and HRD. In order to support the Conference, a task coordination conference was formed, involving the Vice-Minister of Education and HRD as the chair and 13 officers of related government agencies.

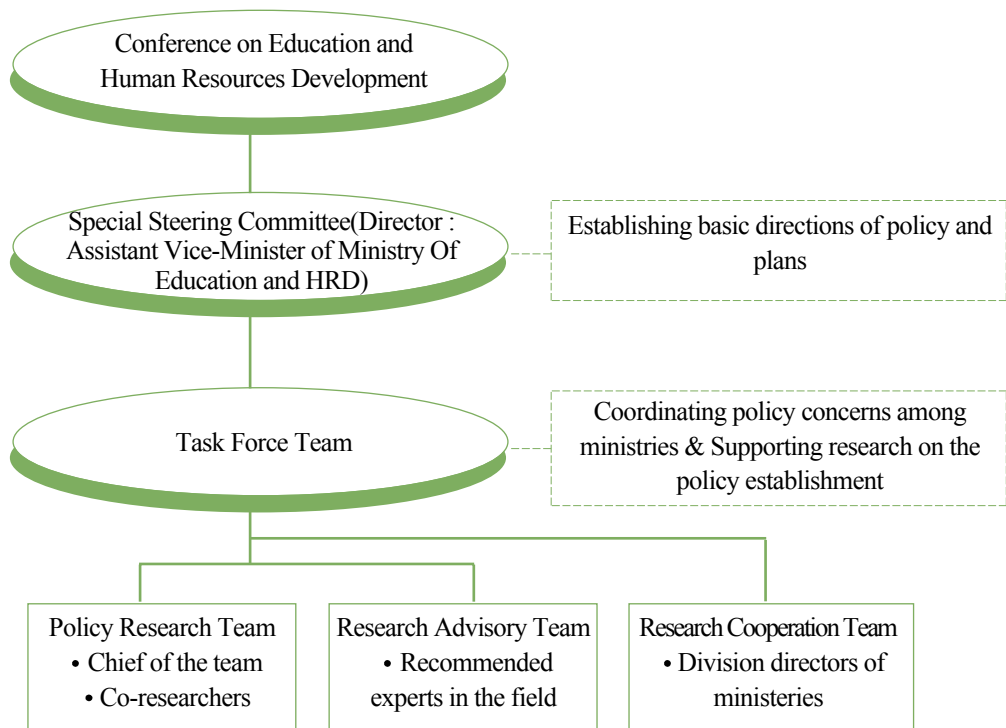
The Conference held eight meetings and carried out the investigation and coordination of 24 separate agendas in 2000. It also held seven meetings and undertook the coordination of 17 agendas in 2001. The activities of the Conference relating to early childhood education and childcare were initiated at the 12th meeting held in 2002. At this meeting, the Minister of Gender Equality put forward the need to establish a policy of early childhood education and childcare based on the support of the citizenry as well as the need to establish policy plans by individual government agencies.

The Conference decided to initiate the Steering Committee for the Development of Early Childhood Education and Childcare. The Steering Committee consists of director-level officials from the ministries related to early childhood education and childcare issues. It decided to carry out a collaborative policy research. On the 13th of November, 2002, the Steering Committee held its first meeting and discussed and established plans to promote early childhood education and childcare development. Since this first meeting, collaborative



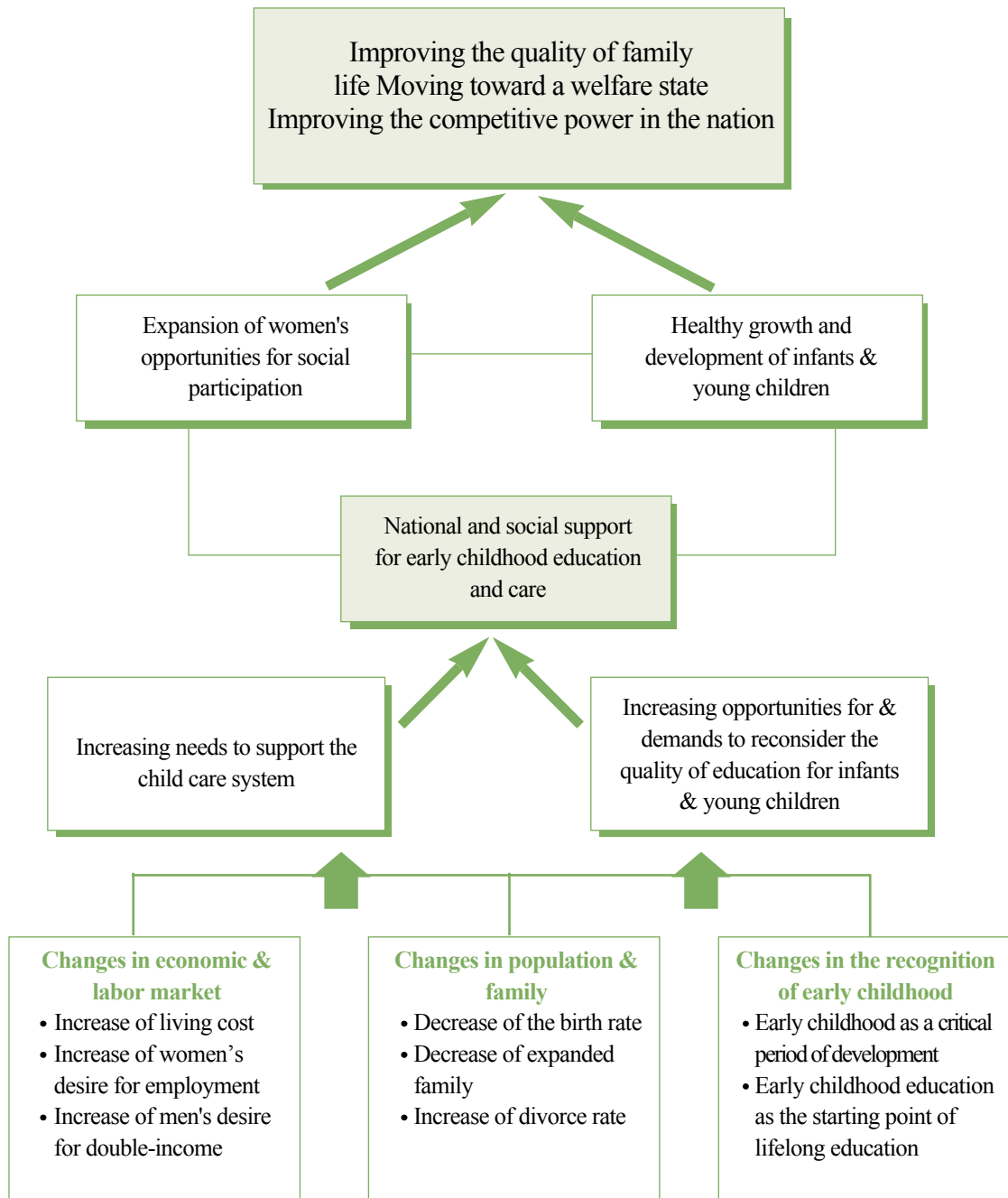
policy research has been undertaken and is ongoing as of March 2003. The content of the plan and the organization of the Conference are as follows.

- Purpose: To set out basic principles and policy directions for early childhood education and childcare within the government
- Title : 「Steering Committee for Early Childhood Education and Childcare Development」
- Features: A forum for discussion within the government on directions for the development of early childhood education and childcare
- Organization: Chair (Assistant Vice minister of the Ministry of Education and HRD), Committee members (Director-level officials from the related government agencies)  
The Ministries involved : Ministry of Education and HRD, Government Administration and Home Affairs, Culture and Tourism, Agriculture & Forestry, Health and Welfare, Labor, Planning and Budget, Gender Equality, Finance and Economy, Construction and Transportation
- Task Force Team: Policy Research Team, Research Advisory Team, Research Collaboration Team
- \* The members of each team are experts recommended by the Ministries, and the Research Advisory Team consists of non-government experts who review research plans and provide advice.



<Figure 2-2> Organization of the Conference on Human Resources Development

The task force team took into consideration of the following background factors in setting out basic principles and policy directions(see Figure 2-3): changes in economic and labor market, in the population and family, as well as in the recognition of early childhood. Based on the background factors, the importance of specific policies which support women's childrearing and provide quality education and care to infants and young children were recognized. The task force team forecasted that healthy growth and development of young children as well as expansions of women's opportunities for social participation will be achieved by national and societal support for early childhood education and care (see Figure 2-3).



<Figure 2-3> Background factors in establishing policies for the development of early childhood education and care

## **2.6. NGO activities**

### **2.6.1. Teachers Associations**

#### **Korea Federation of Teachers' Associations**

The Korea Federation of Teachers' Associations was created in 1947 with the goal of creating a better school environment overall, including societal and economic ranking of the teaching profession and the furthering of the system of as well as the culture of as well as the culture of education. This organization combines the participation of individuals in other educational organizations such as the City and Provincial Federation of Teachers' Association as well as the participation of school teachers.

The organization is helping to promote institutionalized public early childhood education. They are also working toward the implementation of tuition free locales for children 5 years and older as well as providing financial assistance.

#### **Korea Federation of Kindergartens**

The Korea Federation of Private Kindergartens was created in July of 1981, and changed its name to the Korea Federation of Kindergartens in September of 1996. Since private kindergartens are a major part of this organization, it is helping to create more private kindergartens in the nation. The goal of this organization is to search for better ways of educating children as well as to develop a system of early childhood education in Korea.

The Korea Federation of Kindergartens took the leadership in legislating the *Early Childhood Education Development Act* in September of 1998. In collaboration with other organizations, the Korea Federation of Kindergartens held several pan-national campaigns in order to promote tuition free education in October of 2002. Currently, this organization works to create better circumstances, with respect to educational costs as well as wage payment, for the teachers of private kindergartens.

#### **National Teacher' Union Organizing Committee**

In May of 1989, National Teachers' Union organizing Committee was created in order to set a democratic citizenship for students. Though this organization initially focused its

activities in Seoul, it has since expanded to other areas of the nation, focusing on primary and secondary school level teachers. This organization works towards the reform of education overall, using teachers as leaders for the overall reform of education.

Since both public and private kindergarten educators have joined this organization, the organization aims toward resolving the problems and issues regarding both public and private kindergartens. The main focus deals with the improvement of teacher treatment and institutionalized public early childhood education.

### **Korea Daycare Teachers Association**

The Korea Daycare Teachers Association is an organization created in July of 1997 as a result of the conversion of the Community Daycare Association that was founded in February of 1986. The goal of this organization is to take responsibility for the rights of children and to create ‘the socialization of childcare’ through various activities for improving the status of childcare teachers.

This organization works for teachers who research and teach, as well as for the development of childcare; much effort is going into heightening the level of childcare. This organization is also working to create opportunities for free education for five-year-old children.

## **2.6.2. Parents Group**

### **National Association of Parents’ Groups for Quality Education**

The National Association of Parents’ Groups for Quality Education was created in September of 1989. The organization was created in order to create a healthier school environment in the midst of the fiercely competitive school climate and the keen struggle for university entrance. The group works to combat the many difficulties facing parents as well as students.

The National Association of Parents’ Groups for Quality Education has created a variety of different operations including the participation of the general workforce in educational and extracurricular activities in order to better the education of their children. The National Association of Parents’ Groups for Quality Education also represents the parents of children

enrolled in early childhood education programs and works for the institutionalized public early childhood education in cooperation with other organizations public early childhood education.

### **Parental Consolidation for the Realization of Human Education**

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Parental Consolidation for the Realization of Human Education was created in April of 1990. This organization was founded by parents who desired character development leading to better opportunities for their children.


“Mature parents, independent school, healthy children” is the motto for this group which works to build a better relationship between schools and parents of whether it be against attacks on education or to lower tuition fees. This group of parents also works with the Center for Parental Support, the Committee on Policy Research, and the Counseling Committee in their many activities.

This group is also active in aiming to monitor education for students thus creating a better society overall. The parents participate in Parental Consolidation for the Realization of Human Education, working with early childhood education laws in order to inform the nation about its importance as well as the need for its development.

#### **2.6.3. Women’ s organizations**

In February of 1987, Korea Women’ s Associations United was created in order to deal with gender equality, to care for the well-being of women, and to deal with other issues involving women in society. There are 6 branches with 27 membership groups. Aiming toward a society providing equality to all genders and a society of cooperation between males and females, this organization is the representative women’ s group in the nation.

To date the Korea Women’ s Associations United has worked for a variety of different causes, such as better methods of childcare, laws against domestic abuse, and maternal and parental leave. Currently, the group is very active in monitoring and developing better childcare policy. In the future, this group aims to create a better society, including cooperation between men and women both at work and at home, and a society without aggression moving toward peace.



# **III Early Childhood Education and Care Policy Concerns**



# III

## Policy Concerns in Early Childhood Education and Care

### **3.1. Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development: A plan for the development of early childhood education**

#### **3.1.1. Establishment of early childhood education into institutionalized public education: Educational Reform Committee, 1997.**

The Educational Reform Committee declared the ‘Plan for the establishment of early childhood education as public education’ to be part of the educational reform plan on June 2, 1997. The Reform Plan for Early Childhood Education aims that the government should take charge of administration and provision of support for early childhood education as a reflection of policies in other advanced countries. That is, the government should provide quality childcare to children under three as well as providing education and care to children from three to five in integrated way. The basic directions of the reform were as follows:

First, education for children from three to five needs to be included in an institutional public education system, and a new early childhood education system needs to be established in order to provide children with both education and care.

Second, in order to ensure equal opportunities for education to all children, priority in providing early childhood education services needs be given to disadvantaged children of low-income families, lessening the burden on parents.

Third, by providing children with one year of free education before starting formal schooling, opportunities and rights for education need to be guaranteed. An equal start needs to be offered to all.



Based on these reform directions, the Reform Committee suggested ‘the development of the preschool system’ and ‘providing one-year of free education before starting formal schooling’ and so on. For the development of the preschool system, the Committee proposed the following measures: 1) establishing a preschool system by organizing education for children from three to five, 2) establishing systems to enhance the quality of preschool, and 3) expanding support for preschool by the government and the self-governing local organizations. In order to provide one year of free education before entering elementary school, the proposals were 1) to ensure the rights of eligible children and gradual implementation of free education, and 2) to achieve 100% preschool enrollment by 2005.

### **3.1.2. The Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Early Childhood**

#### **Education: Committee of Early Childhood Education Development, 2000**

In order to carry out the Reform Plan for Early Childhood Education, several committees were formed. The Committee for Early Childhood Education Development, the most recently formed among them, developed the following plans:

- 1) Direction of the Preschool system: Establishing an integrated system of education and welfare by providing both education and care.
- 2) An equal start through expanding opportunities for early childhood education and care: Providing free education to all five year old children; providing support for children of low-income families; increasing the numbers of preschools and improving the preschool environment.
- 3) Consideration for the quality of early childhood education and care: reforming pre-service teacher training.
- 4) Fortifying the support system for early childhood education and care by reorganizing and expanding administrative agencies as well as by activating research and development of relevant policies.

## 3.2. Ministry of Health and Welfare

### 3.2.1. Promotion Plan for Childcare: Committee on the Development of Childcare(2001)

The Ministry of Health and Welfare formed the Committee on the Development of Childcare in 2001, and developed promotion plans for childcare in the following five aspects: 1) pursuit of public childcare as the basic direction of childcare policy; 2) childcare administration and support systems; 3) childcare staff systems, 4) childcare finance, and 5) childcare curriculum and special education policy.

Specific directions of the promotion plans in each aspect are listed in <Table 3-1>.

<Table 3-1> Directions for the Promotion of Childcare

Basic directions	Specific directions
Building foundations of public childcare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Shifting a policy focus from supplier-centered (childcare center-based) to client-centered (child &amp; parent-based)</li><li>- Providing equal opportunities of care to all children in need without restriction to certain children (adopting the principle of universality)</li><li>- Ensuring the quality of childcare rather than the merely quantitative expansion of facilities</li><li>- Dividing tasks and roles of the government and parents through expanding public childcare</li></ul>
Improving childcare administration and support systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Activating childcare information centers,</li><li>- Utilizing the childcare facility evaluation,</li><li>- Improving childcare policy delivery system in local self-governing organizations,</li><li>- Enhancing the operation of childcare at workplace</li></ul>
Improving childcare staff systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Staff qualification,</li><li>- Training system,</li><li>- Salaries,</li><li>- In-service training.</li></ul>
Improve childcare finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Finance evaluation</li><li>- Support system</li></ul>
Improving childcare curriculum and special childcare system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Standardized childcare curriculum &amp; planning principles</li><li>- Infant childcare</li><li>- Childcare of children with special needs</li><li>- After-school childcare</li><li>- Producing the appropriate ratio of teacher and child</li><li>- Standards for childcare facilities and equipments</li></ul>

### **3.2.2. Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Childcare (Ministries of Health & Welfare, of Labor, and of Gender Equality, 2002)**

As a follow-up to the Promotion Plan for Childcare established by Committee on the Development of Childcare in 2001, the Ministry of Health and Welfare proposed the Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Childcare in collaboration with Ministries of Labor and of Gender Equality. The Comprehensive Plan aims at meeting various needs for childcare and expanding a base for women's social participation. It focuses on the following:

- 1) Expanding the supply of childcare services as well as providing quality childcare and diverse programs: expanding infant (0 to 2 yr. old) childcare services for working mothers; supporting special childcare services such as night and 24-hour childcare services; after-school programs utilizing primary school facilities; supporting parent co-op childcare, childcare at workplaces, and encouraging religious facilities to be used as childcare centers.
- 2) Reestablishing the principle of governmental support for special and public childcare services as a supplement to private childcare: adopting the childcare accreditation system to regulate quality, providing conditions for private childcare facilities to enhance their quality, and reexamining professionalism of childcare teachers
- 3) Establishing childcare infrastructures by developing and delivering the standardized childcare curriculum

### **3.2.3 Concerns of Other Ministries on Childcare**

Besides the Ministries of Education and HRD and of Health and Welfare, various other ministries are involved in childcare directly or indirectly: the Ministries of Gender Equality, of Labor, of Government Administration & Home Affairs, of Agriculture & Forestry, and so on. Most of these ministries are more interested in childcare than early childhood education.

The Ministry of Gender Equality, established in 2001, has been showing a heightened interest in childcare by participating in the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Childcare in March 2003.

The Ministry of Government Administration & Home Affairs is currently carrying out

the infant care policy and building infant childcare facilities in 15 local self-governing organizations nation-wide. The government support totals 5 billion won(\$4,166,667) and individual local self-governing organizations have invested 3 billion won(\$2,500,000) per infant care facility.

The Ministry of Labor is making efforts in expanding childcare at workplaces in order to support women who wish to balance home and work. Currently, employer childcare facilities cover only 20% of the total workplaces required to provide childcare services to employers. The Ministry supports childcare teachers' salaries and facility- remodeling, and provides benefits for loans. As of June 2002, there were 114 employer childcare centers including 46 centers in big companies and 68 centers in small companies. To ensure quality employer childcare, the Ministry increased the limits on loans from 3 billion won(\$2,500,000) to 5 billion won(\$4,166,667), and expanded the benefit of establishing subsidies to all companies (the government only offered subsidies to small companies in the past).

The Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry runs the 'Center for Women Farmers' in eighteen places nationwide in order to support women in farming villages. Children's Houses and after-school classes provide childcare services to children of women farmers and have received positive response from communities.

### **3.3. Quality**

#### **3.3.1. The Importance of Reconsidering the Quality**

Research on kindergarten education has been conducted for decades and across many areas. The bulk of this research has been devoted to building up the infra-structure of kindergarten education, to expanding educational opportunities, and to educational content and methods of improving the quality of education.

Research on childcare began to blossom after the establishment of the Childcare Act in 1991. In the beginning, research was directed to systems and relevant laws on childcare. Recently, research has been encompassing a range of topics including improving the quality of childcare staff and programs. Research on factors affecting the quality of kindergarten and childcare facilities has been reviewed in terms of the establishment of standards, management, staffing, and so on.

### **Implications of research for the quality of early childhood education and care**

A considerable amount of research on kindergartens and childcare facilities has reported that the following points need to be considered in examining the quality of ECEC in Korea.

First, the physical environments of kindergartens and childcare facilities affect the quality of education and care heavily and impact young children's development as well. Both indoor and outdoor facilities and equipments need to be prepared properly and the number of children per class must be lowered.

Second, since the effects of education and care depend on programs being implemented in kindergartens and childcare facilities, quality programs need to be developed and implemented. In particular, more attention needs to be paid to full-day programs, since these have increased rapidly in recent days.

Third, the current staffing system of kindergarten and childcare facilities reveals problems with the dual-level pre-service training system and curricula, with considerable variation in qualifications, and so on. Establishing a unified pre-service training system, raising the bottom line of educational level for teachers, modifying teacher training curricula for less variation, and adopting accreditation systems for teacher training institutions are measures that need to be considered for better staffing. In particular, the pre-service training and qualifications of the childcare teacher need to be reexamined since the childcare teacher's certificate is given to those who complete required credits regardless of whether or not they graduated from the early childhood education department.

Fourth, a childcare program evaluation or accreditation system needs to be adopted in order to regulate the quality of childcare facilities due to their rapid expansion.

#### **3.3.2. Improving Staff Qualifications**

Strategies for improving qualifications of kindergarten teachers and of childcare teachers are administered by the Ministries of Education and HRD and of Health and Welfare respectively. The common strategies are to raise the bottom line of educational levels and to extend the period of pre-service teacher training.

Since 2000, establishing the department of early childhood education has been allowed only in 4-year colleges, not in 2-year colleges. Since 2001, 2-year-college programs for pre-

service kindergarten teacher training have been extended to three years.

Since 1996, more than 1000 hours of pre-service training has been required to become a childcare teacher. Childcare teachers were trained for 200 hours in 1991 and 800 hours in 1993. Furthermore, childcare teacher certificate systems need to be adopted since childcare teacher certificates are given to students who complete required courses.

### **3.3.3 Regulations and Standards for establishment, facilities, and equipment**

#### **Kindergarten establishment, facility, and equipment standards**

In order to establish and run kindergartens, necessary facilities and equipment must meet standards set out by presidential decree and laid down in the “Regulations for establishment and operation of schools below the high school level”. The standards for indoor and the outdoor facilities are given as follows.

School buildings must be appropriate, for the learning and well being of the staff depends directly and indirectly upon them. The basic calculation formula for area is the following: If there are fewer than 40 students :  $5N$ , if there are 41 students or more :  $80 + 3N$  (\*  $N$  is the established number of kindergarten students overall).

Outdoor playgrounds must be located in or near school locations for the physical development of the children. The standard area of the playgrounds is dependent upon the number of students - if there are fewer than 40 students : 160, if there are 41 or more students :  $120 + N$  (\*  $N$  is the established number of kindergarten students overall). However, this regulation can be eased if schools receive an approved statement by the Minister of Education or the head superintendent of the city/province that there is no negative effect upon children. These cases require that ‘the outdoor playground of another school, public playground facilities, and so on are located adjacent to the kindergarten, and that insufficient area within the city or restrictions within certain locations be reasons for the playground absence.’

The school building must be safe, have sound insulation, be well ventilated, have adequate lighting, be free of fire hazards, have a well developed drainage system, and should not hinder the attendance of school by either teachers or children. In the case of private kindergartens, the responsibility goes not only to the teachers, but to the founder of the school as well.

For the benefit of the children as well as for the teachers, the interior of the schools should include the following: light fixtures with an illumination of greater than 300 Lux, a noise level of less than 55 decibels, and a temperature above 18 degrees centigrade.

The head superintendent of each city/province is to decide and notify the types and standards of the teaching materials. In the case of Seoul, the standards for teaching materials are categorized into 15 different areas. The standards of teaching materials for the free choice activity area, considered particularly important in kindergarten education, are emphasized. Most kindergartens will have seven to nine activity different areas, each with different themes. Changing the areas spontaneously and regularly is recommended in order to maintain the interest of the children. A variety of different teaching materials and equipments including tables and chairs must be available for children's learning and play. Play areas should include a sandbox, locales for playing with water, gardens and other places to raise plants and animals, as well as instruments and equipment for outdoor play. Each playground is required to have at least three kinds of play equipment, such as a slide or swing set, though additional equipment is also recommended.

### **Childcare Facility establishment, facility, and equipment standards**

In the *Child Care Act* No. 6, there is a clear vision laid out as to the availability of the different kinds of childcare facilities: national/public, private, employer, and family childcare. In the *Child Care Act* No. 7, the different requirements for establishing each of these different facilities are stipulated..

National/public childcare facilities are created under the assumption that there is public interest and funding; therefore, these facilities do not need separate approval for their establishment. Private childcare facilities must register with the city mayor or other city officials in order to establish a facility. The childcare facilities of companies are established for the employees of the company or as separate facilities sponsored by companies. Therefore, these locales may be categorized as private facilities. Likewise, family day cares are individually run locations and require registration with the city for establishment.

The standards of childcare facilities are stated clearly within the Childcare Acts. More specifically, the standards for establishment, the rules of the location, construction and provisions, integrated childcare for children with special needs are clearly given.

Childcare facilities must meet a variety of demands concerning the health, hygiene, safety, and the commute to and from the facility. All of these are taken into consideration when selecting a location in order to create a pleasant environment.

The facility equipment and provision must be set up by considering the characteristics of the children within that location. Generally, childcare facilities must have space more than 3.63m<sup>2</sup> per child.

Basically, childcare classrooms need to be located on the first floor. However, in case of establishing childcare facilities on floors beyond the second, there must be facilities to use in emergency. In the case of facilities located on the basement level, 80% of the facility building must be above ground. Including general living rooms, rooms for babies to crawl, playrooms, there must be at least 2.64m<sup>2</sup> available per child under the age of three and 1.98m<sup>2</sup> for children over the age of three. There must be linens for napping, play equipment, picture books, and so on. The facilities must also have dehumidifying equipment as well as the standard heating and cooling units.

The lighting and ventilation of the kitchen must be well established and there must also be protective screening against insects on all of the windows. The facility must be easily disinfected and cleaned in order to maintain sanitary and hygienic conditions at all times.

Bathrooms and washrooms must include a shower or a bathing area. Indoor plumbing with flushing toilets is assumed to be the norm; however, in the instance where this is not available, disinfectant and insecticides must be made available for use. Also, there needs to be the proper toilet equipment in order to serve all the children.

Playgrounds need to be at least 2.5m<sup>2</sup> in area per child and there should be three or more types of playing facilities available. However, because of the space constraint in the city, indoor playgrounds or neighboring playgrounds are also acceptable. (But, family daycare and small childcare facilities of less than 30 children are not required to have on site playgrounds.)

Additionally offices, nursing areas, breast-feeding, and other locations should be established as needed. The inclusion of these other features is only on the condition that the other standards and requirements of the childcare facility have been met.



The concurrent unit establishment of childcare centers within the national/ public social welfare centers is permitted. So is the concurrent position of childcare staff.

### 3.3.4. Developing and Delivering the curriculum, programs, and teaching manuals

#### Kindergarten Curriculum and Teaching Manuals

The kindergarten curriculum in Korea was established in 1969 for the first time and has since gone through five revisions. The Sixth Revision began to be used from March 1st, 2000. The kindergarten curriculum consists of five different domains of children's life, including health, social well-being, creative expression, language, and scientific inquiry. The goals and content of each domain are presented in different levels (level I, level II, and common levels). Level I is for three to four year old children, focusing on the basic needs of individual children with content beginning from the most fundamental and simple levels. Level II is more complex and varied, and it includes comparing and analyzing activities. Being the most fundamental and basic level of education, the purpose of kindergarten education is all-around development of the child. The emphasis of kindergarten education is placed on the basic abilities and attitudes needed in everyday life. More specifically, the goals of kindergarten education are as follows:

- First, to provide experiences for healthy physical and emotional growth;
- Second, to develop basic habits of daily life and the ability to live harmoniously with others;
- Third, to provide opportunities to express one's feelings and thoughts creatively;
- Fourth, to provide opportunities to use language properly;
- Fifth, to develop the attitude of being able to solve problems.

<Table 3-2> Contents of the National Kindergarten Curriculum

Areas	Content
Health	Senses and Awareness of Body/ Basic Motor Ability/ Health/Safety
Social Relationships	Basic Everyday Life Habits/ Individual Life/ Family Life/ Group Life/ Social Phenomena and Environment
Creative Expression	Exploration/ Expression/ Appreciation
Language	Listening/ Speaking/ Fostering Interests in Reading & Writing
Inquiry	Scientific Inquiry/ Mathematical Inquiry/ Creative Inquiry

For the effective use of the National Kindergarten Curriculum in practice, twelve volumes, entitled “Teaching Manuals of Kindergarten Activities” have been developed. These teaching manuals consist of an overview, activity materials by themes of everyday life, and materials for the full day program. A total of 10 themes appear in the manuals, including “my kindergarten and me”, “family and neighbors”, “seasons”, “healthy mind and body”, “animals”, “the earth and the environment”, “tools and machines”, “my country and other countries”, and special holidays. These themes were chosen by considering the interests and the developmental levels of children, educational values, and integration of five domains of the curriculum.

### **Childcare Programs**

The basic components of childcare programs include care, education, nutrition, health, safety, services for parents, and the exchanges with communities. In establishing and implementing program plans, childcare facilities need to consider these basic components as follows:

Care : ensure infants’ and young children’s emotional security by providing sensitive care in home-like atmosphere

Education : provide experiences to advance the physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and linguistic development of the children, helping each child develop self-esteem

Nutrition : provide meals and snacks on a regular basis that follow nutritional ideals and need to help children develop healthy eating habits

Health : provide preventive services for the physical and mental well-being of the children. Also help find any physical problems at date in order to promote health for the child and his family as well as his community.

Safety : make efforts to emphasize the importance of taking precautionary actions. Also need to help the children gain the ability and skills to live a safe life.

Services for parents : help parents understand the role and goals of the childcare facilities through parent participation, parent education, and childcare facility observation in order to raise the effectiveness of childcare overall.

Exchanges with the community : contribute to the welfare of the entire community,

childcare facilities, and families through the participation of community human resources in childcare activities, the community use of childcare facilities, and the use of community facilities and mass media.

Childcare facilities need to have agendas not only for each day, but for entire weeks and months as well. The childcare plans need to include individual and group activities and active and quiet play in order to develop children's cognitive, social, physical, and linguistic abilities, including activities necessary for biological needs such as nursing and toilet use.

The following aspects need to be considered in planning childcare program contents:

**Health and Safety :** Enhancing children's sensory-motor and physical abilities as well as ensuring healthy and safe life patterns.

**Social Relationships :** Helping children develop the basic everyday life habits and self-control skills, and social knowledge and attitudes in order to be able to respect others despite difference and to get along with others.

**Creative Expression :** Fostering children's abilities to express themselves in spontaneous and creative ways by providing various activities and thus, develop children's emotional security and aesthetic appreciation

**Language :** Helping children gain interest in the spoken and written word in addition to exposing of these children to the basics of language overall, and thus enabling children to enjoy their use of language.

**Inquiry :** Helping children have curiosity and interest for things and phenomena around them and inquire about the questions that they have. Fostering children's problem solving abilities and attitudes.

<Table 3-3> Childcare Programs (Developed by the Ministry of Health and welfare)

Title of Programs	Year of Development
Infant and Young children Care Program (10 Volumes)	1993
Infant Care Program (8 Vol.) Meal Program (3 Vol.)	1995-1996
Infant Safety Program(2 Vol.) Childcare Program(11 Vol.)	1999
Educational Program for Young Children(7 Vol.)	
Care Program for Children with Special Needs (3 Vol.)	
Parent Involvement and Education Program(3 Vol.)	
Infant Education Program(4 Vol.)	
After-school Program(7Vol.)	
Infant and Young Children Safety Program	
Standardized Childcare Program	2002

In summary, childcare programs focus on care, education, nutrition, health, and safety in addition to services to parents and the community. Childcare programs are similar to kindergarten programs in educating children, parents and community through the use of well-planned agendas and the program content as well. Nonetheless, childcare programs are not planned and implemented in a framework of educational curriculum while kindergarten programs are.

### 3.3.5 Supervision

#### Supervision of Kindergartens

The supervision of the kindergarten is conducted by 16 individuals within the head superintendent of city and provincial office of education and 180 individuals from the early childhood education superintendents in county and district office of education.

In order to enhance the quality of supervision, the city and provincial office of education supervises a small number of kindergartens under the idea of ‘sample supervision.’ For example, there are about 20 kindergartens in the city of Seoul that are participating in ‘sample supervision’ where the superintendent visits each one of them and writes ‘records of on-site supervision conference’. Usually, the records consist of inspections of kindergarten administration as well as confirmation of major educational policy and plans for policy implementation in the individual kindergarten level.

With the name ‘assigned supervision,’ the office of education of each district plans to

visit kindergartens at least once a year and writes the ‘records of assigned supervision conference.’ The records consist of 5 areas and 14 items, which are taken into consideration and rated in 3 scales of low, average, high in order to give assurance or warnings and actions to kindergartens.

<Table 3-4> City level of Inspection Conference Record Sheet

Name of Kindergarten			
Date			
Name of Inspector			
Conference Items	Limitations & Difficulties	Strengths	
1. Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Curriculum preparations for this year</li> <li>■ Staff working condition</li> <li>■ Children's safety and guidance</li> <li>■ Documentation</li> <li>■ Overall management of the kindergarten</li> </ul>			
2. Educational policy plans and implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Education of good personality and value               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Activity plans of daily habits and values</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Diverse curricular implementation               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Planning &amp; checking appropriateness of yearly curricular</li> <li>- Full-day program</li> <li>- Specific activities based on field experiences</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Teaching methods considering children's individual differences               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Choice activities</li> <li>- Activities based on discussion</li> <li>- Spontaneous learning based on children's curiosity</li> <li>- Classroom volunteers</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Management based on self-regulation and responsibility               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Democratic management</li> <li>- Plans of self-regulated, internal inspection</li> <li>- Climate of staff-conducted research</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Improvement of welfare and educational conditions               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Efficient budget management</li> <li>- Utilization of educational materials</li> <li>- Staff treatment &amp; placement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>			
3. Overall comments			

<Table 3-5> Provincial level of Assigned Inspection Conference Record Sheet

Category	Focus	Conference Items	Evaluation			Confirmed items & Recommended actions
			High	Mode rate	Low	
1. Education of good personality and value/ fostering sense of community and citizenship	■ Practicing the observance of norms and rules of a democratic society	-Basic manners -Traffic safety education in partnerships w/ home				
	■ Education of good personality based on hand-on experiences	-Plans Field trip plans -Reverence toward the elderly				
	■ Fostering a sense of community/ cooperation and services	-Korean traditional play, field trip -Saving resources & materials by recycling				
2. Diverse curricular implementation to promote creative thinking and potentials	■ Diverse curriculum implementation considering features of individual kindergartens and communities	-Curriculum planning based on purposes of the kindergarten & the features of communities				
	■ Provision for educational activity considering children's individuality and aptitude	-Integrating a play-based curriculum -Choice activities				
3. Developing teaching methods considering children's ability, aptitude, & individuality	■ Flexible teaching method considering children's individual differences & self-directed learning	-Encouraging & permissive learning atmosphere -Attentive listening to children's questioning -Discussion, experimentation, problem-solving -Teacher behavior				
4. School administration of autonomy, responsibility, & participation	■ Forming school communities in collaboration with home and community	-Parent involvement & education -Classroom volunteers as teaching aids -Continuity in elementary schools				

	■ Participation in decision-making/ evaluation	-Management with responsibility -Self-regulated, internal inspection -Evaluation of children, staff, & program				
5. Welfare and improvement of education	■ Professionalism of the staff	-Participation in in-service training programs -Staff-conducted research				
	■ Modernizing school facilities					
	■ Emphasizing safety education					
	■ Promoting staff welfare	-Encouraging the staff to pursue higher levels of education -Provision of pension plans & insurance -Plans of raising salaries				
	■ Management of documents	-Gathering & utilizing related documents				
6. Others	■ Particulars, feature projects, and suggestions					

### **Supervision of Childcare Facilities**

According to Child Care Act No.19, the Minister of Health and Welfare can request cooperation to the Minister of Education and HRD regarding supervision and childcare program development and delivery. For the remaining specific aspects of supervision are to set by the presidential decree. Nonetheless, there was only one case when the two ministries worked together regarding supervision of childcare facilities. Thus, the Ministry of Health and Welfare is planning to utilize a childcare accreditation system in order to ensure the quality of childcare.

## **3.4 Access**

### **3.4.1 Establishment and Management of Kindergarten and childcare facilities**

Access to early childhood education and care services first began with the public kindergartens, then the private kindergartens, and is increasing with recent expansion of

childcare facilities. There was a dramatic improvement of access to early childhood education services attributable to having a priority in establishing the public kindergartens in farming and fishing communities, islands or other remote areas. The access to early childhood education services, in the large cities was left up to the private kindergartens. In order to reduce the founder's financial burden in establishing a kindergarten, facility ownership is not required. Facilities can be rented for kindergarten operation.

Since 1991, there has been a great increase in the number of childcare facilities and consequently, access to early childhood education and care has increased. In particular, private childcare facilities increased because facility ownership was not required and opening a childcare center was only a matter of reporting.

There was a great increase in the number of kindergartens from 1985 to 1995, but, beginning in 2000, the numbers began to drop, despite the gradual increase in the number of kindergarten-aged children. During last decade, over 20,000 childcare facilities were established with remarkable increases in the number of enrolled children. Because of the increased number of working mothers as well as the increased consumption of individual households, more people became drawn to childcare centers, which have lower costs and longer hours of operation in comparison to kindergartens, which cost more and operate for fewer hours.

<Table 3-6> Annual Changes in Numbers of Infants and Children Enrolled  
in Kindergarten and Childcare Facilities

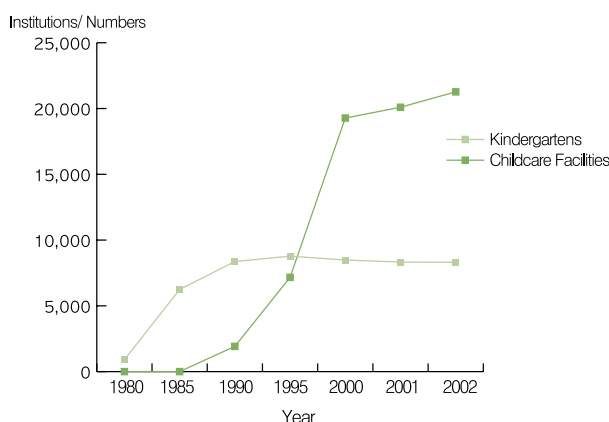
Unit: No. of kindergartens, Childcare facilities, & Children

Classification Year	Institutions/ Numbers		No. of Children	
	Kindergartens	Childcare Facilities	Kindergartens	Childcare Facilities
1980	901		64,433	
1985	6,24 (+5,341)		314,692 (+250,259)	
1990	8,371 (+2,129)	1,919	414,532 (+99,840)	48,000
1995	8,776 (+405)	7,166 (+5,247)	529,052 (+114,520)	293,747(+245,747)
2000	8,482 (-294)	19,276 (+12,110)	544,721 (+15,669)	686,000(+392,253)
2001	8,329 (-153)	20,097 (+821)	545,152 (+431)	734,192(+48,192)
2002	8,308 (-21)	21,267 (+1,170)	550,150 (+4,998)	770,029(+35,837)

Source: Central Childcare Information Center(2002). Statistics on Childcare.

Ministry of Education and HRD & Korean Educational Development Institute(2002). Annual Statistics on Education





<Figure 3-1> Annual Changes in Numbers of Infants and Children Enrolled in Kindergarten and Childcare Facilities

### 3.4.2. Exemptions of Childcare Fees for Children of Low income families

The government supports children of low income families by giving a certain proportion of childcare fees directly to parents of individual children. This governmental support provided since the early period of childcare facility expansion resulted in increased access of disadvantaged children to childcare.

The unit cost of childcare support varies according to family income levels and the age of the child. The priority for childcare fee supports is given to children of livelihood families in need of assistance under the *Livelihood Protection Law*. According to the Livelihood Protection Law, children of very poor families, of single-parent families, and of welfare institutions must be supported for their education.

In addition to children of livelihood protection families, children of families with total income of less than 1,250,000 won(\$1,042) per month are also eligible for governmental support of childcare fees. The government screens eligible children by applying an income conversion system to family property.

As of 2002, the government supported childcare fees for 154,560 children, 20.1% of a total of 770,029 enrolled children. The percentage of support for 0-2 year-olds is 15.5%

(27,439 out of 177,544 children), and that for 3-5 year-olds is 19.1% (112,925 out of 592,475 children). Out of 154,560 children supported by the government, 51,016 children (33.0%) of livelihood protection families are exempted totally while 103,554 children (67.0%) of low income families are exempted from 40% of their childcare fees.

<Table 3-7> The Unit Cost of Childcare Support for Children of Livelihood Protection- and Low Income Households

Unit: won(\$)

Age	Livelihood Protection Households	Low Income Households
Under 2 yr-old	243,000 (\$203)	97,200 (\$81)
2 yr-old	201,000 (\$168)	80,400 (\$67)
3-4 yr. old	125,000 (\$104)	50,000 (\$42)

### 3.4.3. Free Education and Care for five-year-olds Voucher

As of 2002, free education and care for five-year-olds was provided to a total of 113,184 children (26,202 kindergarteners and 86,982 children in childcare facilities), making up 8.3% of the total numbers of five-year-olds.

Children eligible for free education and care are children of livelihood protection families and of low income families (four family members per household with a total income of less than 1,600,000 won(\$1,333) per month or total property worth of less than 50,000,000 won(\$41,667)). This eligibility criteria for free education is higher than that for childcare fee exemption.

Adopting the voucher system, the government supports registration and tuition fees if the eligible children enroll in national/public institutions, and offers supports of up to 100,000 won per month if children enroll private institutions. Free education and care for five-year-olds will be extended gradually by the new government.

The current state of the government-supported free education and care as well as childcare fee exemption is presented in Table3-8.

<Table 3-8> Current State of Governmental Support for Education and Care of  
Infants and Young Children

Classification		Kindergarten	Childcare Facilities	Subtotal	Note	
					No. of Enrolled Children	Percentage Covering Enrolled Children
0~2yr olds	Support for Low Income Families		35,924	35,924	177,554	20.2%
3~5yr olds	Free education for 5 yr-olds	26,202	86,982	113,184	1,142,625	16.0%
	Support for Low Income Families		69,856	69,856		
Total		26,202	192,762	218,964	1,320,179	16.5%

Source: Ministry of Education & HRD(2002). Internal Documents; Ministry of Health and Welfare(2002). Internal Documents, Central Childcare Information Center(2002). Statistics on Childcare

#### 3.4.4. The Policy of Priority for Children with Special Needs

##### Early Childhood Special Education for Handicapped Children

It is stated in the *Special Education Promotion Act* that special education for handicapped children is free. Special education schools implement curricula focused on the education of handicapped children with visual and hearing difficulties, mental and emotional retardation, and physical disability. There are eleven schools for children with special needs specifically running kindergarten programs in the nation with one public and ten private institutions, enrolling 310 children and 86 teachers. Of these, ten schools focus on mentally retarded children while one school focuses on hearing impaired children.

There are 49 national/public schools in the nation which allow young children with special needs to enroll. These schools provide special education integrating early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school level students. There are 87 private schools of integrated levels with 1,410 students and 274 teachers.

There are also 66 regular kindergartens where 340 special children are receiving education from 77 teachers. Therefore, a total of 2,060 children are receiving special education.

<Table 3-9> Current State of Early Childhood Special Education

unit : No. of schools, students(%)

		No. of schools	No. of Students	No. of Teachers
Special Edu. Schools for kindergarten programs	National/Public	1(9.1)	31(10.0)	7(8.1)
	Private	10(90.9)	279(90.0)	79(91.9)
	Sub total	11(100.0)	310(100.0)	86(100.0)
Special Edu. Schools of Integrated Levels	National/Public	49(36.0)	375(26.6)	84(30.7)
	Private	87(64.0)	1,035(73.4)	190(69.3)
	Sub total	136(100.0)	1,410(100.0)	274(100.0)
Children w/ Special Needs in Regular Kindergarten		66	340	77
Total			2,060	437

Source: Special Education Division, Ministry of Education & HRD (2002). Internal Documents

### Current State of Childcare for Infants and Young Children with Special Needs

As of 2002, childcare facilities focusing on the needs of special children only total 66 facilities with ten public and 56 private facilities. In these facilities, there are 2,425 enrolled children and 768 childcare teachers. There are 124 integrated facilities for infants and children with and without special needs in the nation with 51 public and 73 private ones. Childcare services are available to 918 special infants and young children from 225 teachers in integrated facilities. A total of 3,343 infants and young children with special needs receive special childcare services in childcare facilities.

&lt;Table 3-10&gt; Current State of Childcare for Infants and Children with Special Needs

Unit: No. of facilities, children


Type		No. of facilities	No. of Infants and Young Children	No. of Teachers
Program for Special Children Only	National/Public	10(15.2)	265(10.9)	94(12.2)
	Private	56(84.8)	2,160(89.1)	674(87.8)
	Sub total	66(100.0)	2,425(100.0)	768(100.0)
Integrated program	National/ Public	51(41.1)	389(42.4)	108(48.0)
	Private	73(58.9)	529(57.6)	117(52.0)
	Sub total	124(100.0)	918(100.0)	225(100.0)
Total		190	3,343	993

Source: Central Childcare Information Center(2002). Statistics on Childcare

### 3.4.5. Age Flexibility in Entering Elementary School

According to the Enforcement Ordinance No. 20 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Law*, 5-year-old children are permitted to enter elementary school, though the mandatory school education in Korea starts at age of 6. The rationale for the enforcement ordinance is to give flexibility to the elementary school entrance age by admitting 5-year-olds capable of elementary school learning. In order to admit 5-year-olds, the capacity and conditions of the elementary school wanted by parents and children need to be considered and the children's adjustment to school needs to be assured through a one-month-period of observation after the entrance. Initially, the enforcement ordinance attracted parental attention and resulted in a tendency to enroll 5-year-old children in school early. Recently, this tendency has been changed and parents want their children to start elementary school one year later than the starting age of the mandatory education. This reflects changes in parental and wishvalues that "my child should perform better than his/her peers at school."





# **IV Policy Approaches to Early Childhood Education and Care**



# IV

## The current state of early childhood education and care

### 4.1. Regulations and Evaluation

#### 4.1.1. Kindergarten

The size, tuition, and extra curricular program of the kindergarten system have been directed and influenced by the Ministry of Education & HRD. The city or county superintendent of education has the authority to monitor the size and the system of the kindergarten. In Seoul, the class sizes of four and five year-olds, three year olds and mixed age groups are under 30, under 20, and under 25, respectively. Nationally, the class sizes for four to five year olds, three year olds, and mixed age groups are 25~30, 15~25, and 20~30, respectively.

The city or county superintendent of education decides on the tuition range of public kindergartens in consideration of the locale. The tuition range of public kindergartens is between 0 to 360,000 won(\$300). Even if the tuition of private kindergarten is self-regulatory in principle, the Ministry of Finance and Economy limited the annual tuition increase rate to 5%.

The tuition range of private kindergartens is between 90,000(\$75) and 1,500,000 won(\$1,250).

The Ministry of Education & HRD have recommended to the local education authorities and the kindergartens themselves that excessive extra-curricula programs should be prohibited. The Ministry of Education & HRD tried to persuade the kindergarten owners and parents not to run excessive early extra-curricula programs by providing research results demonstrating the negative effects of excessive extra-curricula programs.

The government performed an evaluation of the curriculum's content and an operation to manage the quality of the kindergarten curriculum and provide various evaluation methods, procedure, and tools to the kindergarten. In particular, the evaluation of the operation of the curriculum is carried out by the school inspector under the following guidelines:



- 1) Is the educational content being planned and implemented comprehensively?
- 2) Are the methods of teaching appropriate for the interests of the child and the features of the activities?
- 3) Are the educational environment and the activity materials prepared in consideration of activity themes ?
- 4) Are the evaluation results reflected in planning curriculum for the next year?

The achievements of the child are evaluated according to objectives and content in each curriculum area. The evaluation methods are delivered to teachers through workshops and seminars, and are generally well executed.

1. Focus on health, basic life habits, emotional stability, adaptability to society, creative expression, communication ability, and curiosity.
2. Use various tools such as observation, the recording of events, the analysis of individual products, counseling, etc.
3. Check the degree of individual children's development and describe them in a written form.
4. Use the evaluation result for the effective operation of the curriculum and the counseling of parents.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education & HRD evaluates the city and the provincial Offices of Education biannually. The evaluation includes items related to the early childhood education and kindergartens and focuses on supports of early childhood education by the Office of Education. In short, evaluation on early childhood education in Korea is limited to kindergarten education, and is conducted in the link of child-teacher-kindergarten-local office of education- city and provincial office of education.

#### **4.1.2. Childcare Facilities**

The guidelines of operating childcare facilities are notified in law regarding the child-teacher ratio, childcare fees, and so on.

The child- teacher ratios with the children under 2-year-olds, 3-year-olds, 3-year-olds and older are 1:5, 1:7, and 1:20, respectively. In particular, childcare facilities for children with

special needs must keep 1:5 of the child-teacher ratio, and must have one teacher with the teacher certificate of special education per 10 children. In order to fortifying educational functions of the classes of 3-year olds and older, one teacher with a kindergarten teacher certificate or childcare teacher with the grade 1 level certificate should be assigned to the classes of 40 children. In addition, childcare facilities for infants only must keep the 5: 5 ratio of infants under 2-year-old and 2-year-old.

Childcare fees are designated by local authorities. As of 2002, the local authority-supported unit cost of childcare ranges from 232,000 won(\$193) for infants under 2-year-old and 192,000 won(\$160) for 2-year-old to 119,000 won(\$99) for 3- to 5-year-olds.

With concerns of the quality of childcare, the Ministry of Health and Welfare plans to change the current report system to the licensing system in establishing childcare facilities. Starting in 2003, the accreditation of childcare facilities will be carried out in nation wide.

## **4.2. Pre/Service Teacher Training & Qualifications**

### **4.2.1. Kindergarten Staff**

#### **Qualifications and Tasks of Kindergarten Staff**

The qualifications of kindergarten staff are determined by the president and a certificate is issued by the Ministry of Education & HRD. There are four levels of kindergarten staff qualifications, including grade 2 teachers, grade 1 teachers, assistant director, and director. The same qualifications are applied to national/public and private kindergarten staff.

The main tasks of the kindergarten staff, broken down by qualification standard, are as follows:

Director: Managing the operation of the kindergarten, supervising teachers, and educating children.

Assistant Director: Supporting the director and taking over the tasks of the director in the absence of the director. In the case of kindergartens without an assistant director, the director designates a teacher to take over the tasks of the director.

Teacher: Educating children.

#### **Pre-service Kindergarten Teacher Training and Curriculum**

The first kindergarten teachers were trained when the department of kindergarten teacher

training became established at the Ewha Woman's College in 1915. Since 1945 and the nation's independence, pre-service kindergarten teacher training has varied according to the training institution, which may be a three-year or a two-year college, or a four-year university.

Since the 1970s, the two-year colleges and the four-year universities have been the two major institutions for kindergarten teacher training. The departments of childcare in the two-year colleges were renamed departments of early childhood education. In the 1980s, more universities and colleges established the department of early childhood education, and 30% of the students from the department of child studies were awarded kindergarten teaching certificates if they completed courses for the teaching profession.

In the 1990s, the department of childcare which existed previously reappeared and 30% of students from the department of childcare were given kindergarten teacher certificates. The departments of early childhood education in the two-year colleges have continuously increased in number and changed to 3-year programs in 2002.

As of 2002, prospective kindergarten teachers were being trained in a total of 156 educational institutions, with 90 two-year colleges and 66 four-year universities.

<Table 4-1> Current State of Pre-service Kindergarten Teacher Training

Unit : No. of Students, (%)

Classification		2- & 3-year Colleges			4-year Colleges					Total
Dept.		Early Child hood Educ (ECE)	Child Welfare /Child care	Sub total	Early Child hood Educ.	Child Studies (Child care)	Open univ. (ECE)	College of Industry & Technol ogy (ECE/ Child Welfare	Sub total	
No. of Instituti ons	Nat /Pubic	3	0	3	6	3	1	-	10	13
	Private	77	10	87	26	26	-	4	56	143
	Sub total	80	10	90	32	29	1	4	66	156

Source : Ministry of Education and HRD(2002). Current State of Pre-service Teacher Training Institutions

Kindergarten staff may be promoted from the grade 2 teacher to the director. Promotion to the next level requires 180 hours of in-service training during vacations and at least three years of experiences at each level.

Of the total number of kindergarten teachers, 97% are women. Men having completed training for the director position make up only 2% of private kindergarten founders.

Teachers for national/public kindergartens are hired by open competition. Since national/public kindergarten teachers have status and a salary equivalent to those of elementary and secondary school teachers, national/public kindergarten teaching positions are highly competitive. The starting salary is around 14,600,000 won(\$12,167) per year. However, the average monthly salary of private kindergarten teachers is low, relative to that of public kindergarten teachers. According to HanGil Research Institution (2001), the average of monthly salary of private kindergarten teachers may be broken into four broad salary bands: below 600,000 won(\$500) (13.2% of total private kindergarten teachers) , 610,000(\$508) to 800,000 won(\$667) (45.0%), 810,000(\$675) to 1,000,000 won(\$833) (29.6%) to over 1,000,000 won(\$833)(29.6%). Because of this, many private kindergarten teachers are applying for teaching positions at national/public kindergartens.

#### **4.2.2. Childcare Staff**

##### **Childcare Staff Qualifications and Approval**

The childcare staff consist of director, teacher, nurse, nutritionist, cook, and other staff members. Childcare teachers may be graduates of two-year or four-year colleges, specializing in early childhood education or child welfare or related subjects. But in addition high school graduates or individuals with a high school equivalent diploma who have completed certain childcare teacher training courses may qualify as childcare teachers.

##### **Pre-service Childcare Teacher Training and Curriculum**

Pre-service childcare teacher training started in 1985. The Korea Women's Development Institute developed a training program for child caregivers through demonstration training in 1985 and 1986. The trained child caregivers were converted into childcare teachers in 1991 by completing 200 hours of special pre-service training. Since 1996, there have been 80

childcare teacher training institutions in the nation which run one year of training programs with more than 1,000 hours. Half of these institutions are established in colleges.

There are a number of college majors whose graduates may qualify as childcare teachers, including early childhood education, child welfare, and other related majors, such as home economics, elementary education, psychology, special education, nursing, social welfare, child and family studies, home education, and so on. The required courses for qualification are introductory theories of infant and child care, infant and child development and education, infant and child health, safety, and nutrition, and so on. In order to obtain a childcare teacher certificate, students must complete 30 credits (ten courses) of the required courses and a four-week practicum at childcare facilities, kindergartens, or social welfare facilities. In addition, a childcare teacher certificate is given to students who have completed coursework in their school program in the field of early childhood education, of child welfare, and related fields. The composition of the pre-service childcare teacher training curriculum is presented in Table 4-2

<Table 4- 2 > Childcare Staff Training Curriculum

Classification	Liberal Arts	Introduction to Infant and Child Care	Childcare Practice-oriented Subjects	Theories of Child Welfare	Childcare Practicum	Total
No. of Hours (%)	50 hrs (5%)	300 hrs (30%)	300 hrs (30%)	150 hrs (15%)	200 hrs (20%)	1,000 hrs (100%)

The educational levels of childcare teachers vary due to various teacher training institutions, and 99.5% of childcare teachers are women.

The starting annual salary of teachers working at national/public childcare facilities is 986,000 won(\$822). Childcare teachers working at private facilities earn only 60-75% of the salary of teachers at national/public facilities.

<Table 4-3> Comparison of Teacher Salaries in National/Public Kindergartens vs.  
Childcare Facilities

Classification	Salary Computation		Average Salary
National/Public Kindergarten <sup>1)</sup>	four-year College Grad. (8th-class salary)	755,400 won(\$630) + allowances	1,463,400 won (\$1,220)
Private Kindergarten	two-year College Grad. (6th-class salary)	713,700 won(\$595) + allowances	
Childcare Facilities <sup>2)</sup>	1st-class salary	986,409 won(\$822)	986,409 won (\$822)

note : 1) Kindergarten teachers' salaries are computed based on the personnel wage standards of kindergarten, elementary, and secondary school teachers (2002).

2) The childcare teachers' salaries are computed based on the wage standards of social welfare facilities (2002).

### 4.2.3. Early Childhood Special Education Teachers

According to the Enforcement and Ordinance No. 21 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Law*, special education teachers must major in special education at a four-year college or must be trained to the graduate school level. This is true of early childhood special education teachers. About 150 early childhood special education teachers are trained annually in the department of special education at five universities in the nation.

## 4.3. Program Contents and Implementation

### 4.3.1. Philosophies influencing early childhood education and care in Korea

Early childhood education in Korea was initiated by Japan and the United States. In the early 20th C. German educational philosophy, which influenced Japanese early childhood education, and the educational philosophy of the United States influenced Korean early childhood education. Some representative theorists and educators who had great impact on early childhood education in Korea include Montessori, Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky, Malaguzzi, and so on.

Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, and Dewey provided the philosophical bases of early childhood education in Korea, while Freud, Montessori, Piaget, and Vygotsky provided the psychological bases. Based on these philosophical and psychological bases, children are considered as independent beings with infinite potential. Korean early childhood education aims at developing the whole child and implements an integrated curriculum by providing a variety of activities related to topics of children's interests and everyday life. Child-centered educational philosophy and methods, interactions between child-child, child-teacher, child-environment and materials, as well as play are key words to describe early childhood education in Korea. Recently, many early childhood educational institutions favor the Project approach and the Reggio Emilia program, and value the notion of co-construction of knowledge by the teacher and the child in the learning process.

Classic as well as contemporary educational philosophies, developmental theories, and teaching methods are taught in-depth in pre-service teacher training. Most of colleges require prospective early childhood and childcare teachers to take courses in the pivotal philosophical and psychological theories in the field.

#### **4.3.2. Kindergarten Curriculum**

The planning and implementation of kindergarten curricula in Korea is based on the National Kindergarten Curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education. Specific guidelines for curricula vary according to the city/provincial Office of Education, local Office of Education, and individual kindergarten.

Based on the National kindergarten curriculum, the city and provincial Office of Education prepares 'guidelines for planning and implementation of kindergarten curriculum' and issues them to local offices and kindergartens in the city and province. The guidelines stipulate the number of school days and hours, extended- and full-day programs, class placements, planning and implementation of educational activities, educational evaluation, parent education, special education, continuity with elementary schools, and so on. The city and provincial office of education forms a committee on the kindergarten curriculum, which provides advice in deciding the priorities of education in the city and the province, as well as in planning and implementing curriculum. The committee on the

kindergarten curriculum consists of teachers, administrators, curriculum experts, parents, and resource persons of community and industry.

In addition, the city and provincial Office of Education investigates the current state of support for the local Office of Education, and provides advice for effective implementation of curriculum and quality management. It also develops and delivers materials and manuals for educational activities, runs demonstration kindergartens, develops plans for and administers in-service training on curricula, supports master teachers to improve the quality of instruction, and supports kindergartens to accommodate daily school hours according to parents' needs and the community situation.

The local Office of Education functions on guidelines prepared by the city and provincial Office of Education. It provides individual kindergartens with materials for supervision. The supervisory materials include core educational activities which reflect special features of the community, support for curriculum planning and implementation, cooperation among kindergartens in the region in planning and implementing curriculum, curriculum evaluation and quality management, and so on. The local committee of kindergarten curriculum is established to serve as an advisory in supporting individual kindergartens.

In particular, local offices of education establish plans for supervision, and conduct supervision on a regular basis. They also develop and deliver various educational materials and conduct in-service teacher training regarding curriculum planning and implementation.

On the basis of the National kindergarten curriculum and guidelines issued by the city, or provincial office of education, as well as supervision materials by local office of education, or individual kindergartens plan their curricula. Kindergartens focus on the education of children with respect to basic everyday life, character, creativity, and respect for traditional culture.

Educational content is categorized into five areas with two different levels and educational activities reflecting children's interests and abilities are provided in integrated ways. Indoor and outdoor educational environments are organized into various activity areas and are equipped with plenty of play materials.

Education in kindergarten unfolds in accordance with daily, weekly, and yearly activity plans. Activity plans give a high priority to free choice indoor and outdoor activities. Free



choice activities and materials for activities are prepared across areas and are related to certain topics. Daily activity plans include children's self-evaluation of the day and guidance of everyday routines and habits. Weekly plans notify parents regarding activities in kindergarten, and include free choice activities, whole-group activities, snack time, and departure guidance. Yearly plans show topics to learn about and related activities planned by months for the entire year except for vacation periods. Thus, yearly plans may serve as a useful guide to novice teachers and visitors.

#### **4.3.3. Childcare Programs**

Daily, weekly, and monthly childcare plans must be established in accordance with developmental levels of infants and children. Childcare plans need to include various activities for children's whole development, a balance of individual and group activities, and active vs. quiet play, and consider children's needs for nursing, toilet use, and rest.

Similar to kindergarten curricula, areas of health, social relationships, expressiveness, language, and scientific inquiry need to be considered in childcare programs.

##### **Nutrition :**

Meals are served to children according to menus prepared by the nutritionist. Childcare facilities with less than 100 infants and children can prepare menus under the guidance of the nutritionist in childcare information centers, public health centers, nutrition organizations in the vicinity. Childcare facilities in the same city, county, and district are allowed to share a nutritionist. In addition, childcare facilities must reflect parental requests in serving meals to infants under 1 year old in need of special diets.

##### **Health :**

Childcare facilities provide infants and children with regular health check-ups at least once a year. Childcare facilities must use the medical centers with specialized staff and suitable facilities for infants and children. In particular, oral hygiene must be checked. Childcare facilities need to sanitize their kitchens, bathrooms, and linens regularly and must keep foods fresh at all times.

**Safety :**

Potential factors for fire and injury must be eliminated in advance and check-ups and drills for emergencies must be conducted on a regular basis. Childcare facilities with more than 20 children need to set fire plans and to implement fire drills monthly. They also must build an emergency contact network with a fire department nearby. In addition, walls and ceilings must be finished with non-flammable materials.

**Community Welfare :**

Childcare facilities provide parents and community people with parent education regarding the importance of care for infant and young children, parental roles, guidance strategies, family health, nutrition, etiquettes, and so on. Parent counseling is held and parental involvement is strongly encouraged in planning and implementing childcare programs.

**4.4. Parent Involvement and Support**

Families can participate and support their children in different degrees and different ways, ranging from being a volunteer helper to attending parent education class or demonstration classes.

**4.4.1. Parent Volunteers**

According to the Early Childhood Education Promotion Act, the two volunteer classroom assistants can be provided to the class with the teacher-child ratio of 1: 26. The volunteer classroom assistants are educated for a total of 20 hours with government support. The effects of the volunteer classroom assistant are as follows:

- 1) The workload of the teacher can be lessened.
- 2) Close relationships between kindergartens and families can be formed.
- 3) The volunteering parents can understand the educational programs of the kindergarten better.
- 4) The talents or skills of the volunteer can be utilized in certain educational situations.

Most classroom volunteers are parents. They can support the class by various means

such as cleaning-up the classroom and preparing snacks or materials for classroom activities.

#### **4.4.2. Parent education**

The growth and the development of the child cannot be done only by the early childhood educational institutions. This growth and this development require close collaboration among parents, educational institutions, and various sectors of the community. Parents as the first teachers of the child are the primary educational environment and have a critical impact on the child's growth and development. The positive relationships between parents and the child influence not only the child's early childhood years, but also his/her entire later life. Good parent-child relationships can facilitate children's adaptation and achievement at school as well as reduce negative developmental outcomes. In order to maximize the effects of early childhood education, kindergartens need to share knowledge and skills on children's development with parents.

#### **4.4.3. Hindering factors of family/parent involvement**

According to a study by Na, J. (2002), about 57% of Korean parents participated actively in their children's kindergarten activities. About 42% of the parents were found to be uninvolved. It was reported that the parents suggested their opinions through informal interviews with their children's teachers (Na, Yoo, & Park, 2002).

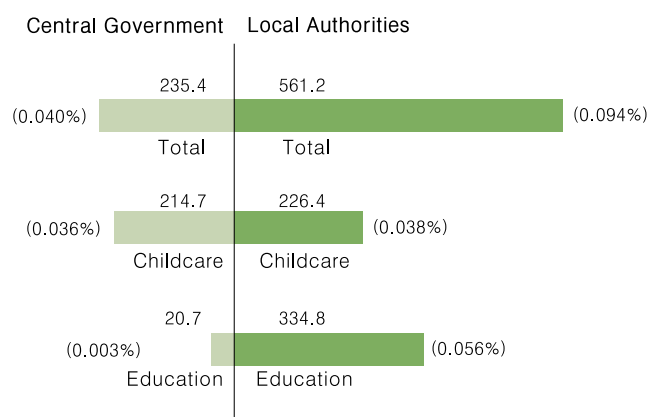
Currently, most parent education in kindergartens is provided during the daytime. Furthermore, most of employing companies does not allow their employees to participate in their children's kindergarten activities during work. Although kindergartens are making efforts to resolve the time conflict by providing parent classroom observations and sports days on weekends, there is still a limitation in parent involvement.

### **4.5. Finance and Funding**

#### **4.5.1. Financial support by government**

As of 2002, the government allocated 355.5 billion won(\$305,000,000) (44.6% of the total cost of ECEC) to early childhood education and 441.1 billion won(\$367,583,333) (55.4%) to

childcare. The total budget of 796.6 billion won(\$663,833,333) was 0.13% of GDP. Of this, 29.8% was supported by the government and the rest of the budget was covered by local authorities. The government provided 214.7 billion won(\$178,916,667) (91.2%) to childcare and 20.7 billion won(\$17,250,000) (8.8%) to early childhood education. The local authorities allocated 226.4 billion won (40.3%) to childcare and 334.8 billion won(\$279,000,000) (59.7%) to early childhood education. In short, the budget for childcare was shared between the government and the local authorities, while the budget for early childhood education was covered by the local authorities.



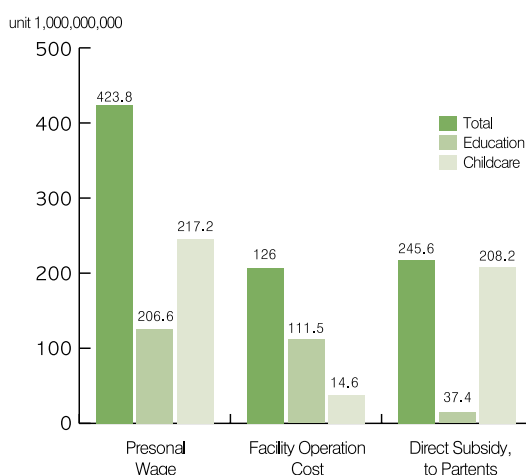
<Figure 4-I> Budgets for Childcare of the Government vs. Local Authorities

#### 4.5.2. Budget Settlement

The budget for early childhood education and care is mainly allocated to salaries (423.8 billion won[\$353,166,667], 53.2%), direct support for infants and young children (245.6 billion won[\$204,666,667], 30.8%), support for facility operation (126 billion won[\$105,000,000]), and other expenses. In early childhood education, the budget is allocated to salaries (206.6 billion won[\$172,166,667], 58.1%) which take the largest portion, facility operating cost (111.5 billion won[\$92,916,667], 31.4%), and direct support for children (37.4 billion won[\$31,166,667], 10.5%). The budget for childcare, in contrast to that for education, allocates to direct support for children a portion of funds similar to that allocated to salaries. That is, 49.2% goes to salaries (217.2 billion won[\$181,000,000]), 47.2% is earmarked for

direct support for infants and young children (208.2 billion won[\$173,500,000]), and the rest goes for facility operating costs (14.6 billion won[\$12,166,667]) and other expenses (11.0 billion won[\$9,166,667]).

The government subsidizes salaries and facility operating costs for national and public kindergartens and childcare facilities. On the other hand, the private sector gains subsidies for material costs only. Thus parents whose children go to the national and public institutions pay minimum fees while those whose children go to the private ones pay more. Support for national/public and private institutions are similar in education and care for children of low-income families and free education/ childcare for five-year-old children. In these cases, parents can choose an institution for their children by using vouchers.

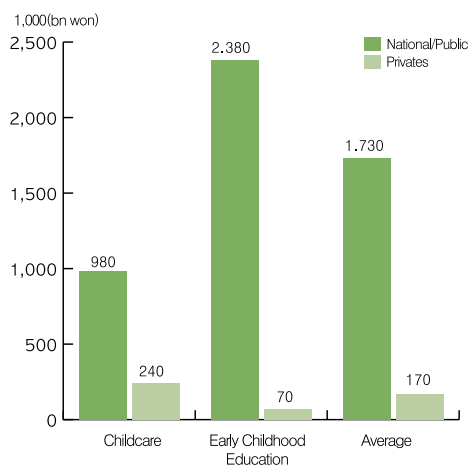


<Figure 4-2> Budget Allocation in Early Childhood Education and Care

<Table 4-4> Support for Education and Care by the Government and Local Authorities

Classification	unit: 10 billion won(\$ U)	
	Local Authorities	Central Government
- Childcare staff salaries	109.5 (\$91,250,000)	105.1 (\$87,583,333)
- Support for childcare of low income families	55.9 (\$46,583,333)	48.9 (\$40,750,000)
- Free childcare for 5 year old Of low income families	54.8 (\$45,666,667)	48.4 (\$40,333,333)
- Materials in private facilities	2.7 (\$2,250,000)	3.4 (\$2,833,333)
- Facility operation in farming and fishing communities	0.3 (\$250,000)	0.5 (\$416,667)
- Operations of childcare information centers	0.2 (\$166,667)	0.3 (\$250,000)
- Supplimenting childcare facilities	3.0 (\$2,500,000)	2.0 (\$1,666,667)

- Childcare facility (Children's House) operation	-	0.8 (\$666,667)
- Support for private organization		0.1 (\$83,333)
- Support for administration	-	0.2 (\$166,667)
- Teacher salary at employee childcare		2.5 (\$2,083,333)
- Support for employer childcare facilities		2.0 (\$1,666,667)
- Free education for 5 year old of low income families	18.3 (\$15,250,000)	18.3 (\$15,250,000)
- Materials in private kindergartens	2.0 (\$1,666,667)	2.0 (\$1,666,667)
- Support for early childhood education (e.g., training fees)	0.4 (\$333,333)	0.4 (\$333,333)
- Support for kindergarten operation	107.5 (\$89,583,333)	
- Salaries in kindergarten	206.6 (\$172,166,667)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>561.2 (\$467,666,667)</b>	<b>235.4 (\$196,666,667)</b>



<Figure 4-3> Supporting Fees per Child in ECEC Provision

#### 4.5.3. Free education and care for five-year-olds vouchers

The Korean government started to provide free education and care to children at age 5 in 2002. Although less than 20 % of five-year-olds receive this benefit, 26,202 children in kindergartens and 86,982 children in childcare facilities were not charged for tuition. If parents choose national/public facilities for their children, tuition fees are waived. If private facilities are chosen, 105,000won(\$88)/per month is given to parents.

#### 4.5.4. Tax benefits


As of 2002, parents whose children go to kindergartens, childcare facilities, and Hakwons, can deduct up to 1,500,000 won(\$1,250) from the annual account settlement. (About 1,000,000 won(\$833) could be deducted until 2001).



**V**

**Evaluation and  
Research on**

**Early Childhood  
Education and  
Care**



# V Evaluation and Research on Early Childhood Education and Care

## 5.1. Statistics on Early Childhood Education and Care

### 5.1.1. Statistics on Early Childhood Education

Annual Statistics on Education and Current State of Kindergarten Education are the two major sources of statistics concerning early childhood education in Korea. These two types of statistical materials are presented on the websites of the Ministry of Education and HRD (MOE) as well as of Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) for free access by the public.

Annual Statistics on Education is a nationally proven statistical compendium which provides comprehensive information on Korean education. It has been published annually by KEDI upon the request of the MOE. Annual Statistics on Education presents statistics on indicators of kindergartens because only kindergartens are considered as ‘schools’ comparable to other levels of school. Thus, statistical information on childcare facilities and other early childhood educational institutions are not available in Annual Statistics on Education.

The investigated items include 1) current state of kindergartens, 2) the number of kindergartens broken down by the type of establishment, 3) the number of kindergartens by the number of enrolled children, 4) the number of children by age, 5) the number of teachers by status, 6) the number of teachers by qualifications, 7) the number of teachers by teaching experience, 8) the number of teachers by educational level, 9) the number of teachers by teaching experience after promotion, 10) the number of teachers by in-service training after promotion, 11) the number of teachers by age, 12) the number of teachers by salaries, 13) the number of teacher by facilities, 14) changes in teacher mobility, 15) the school building site, 16) the classroom space by the purpose of the use, 17) The number of buildings by structure, 18) the building space by structure, 19) The amount of consumed energy, 20) the



areas of heating and cooling, and 21) the number of clerks.

The Current State of Kindergartens is a document of accurate data on the state of kindergartens in Korea. The data are annually collected by the Early Childhood Education Division in the MOE. Although there is considerable overlap in the investigated items between this document and Annual Statistics on Education, several specific items are added, such as tuition fees and current state of full day kindergartens.

The investigated items include 1) overall state of kindergartens, 2) the number of kindergartens by region, 3) the number of kindergartens by the types of establishment (city & province), 4) the number of kindergartens by the region and the types of establishment, 5) the number of classes, 6) the number of teachers by levels of license, 7) the number of teachers by status, 8) the number of classes by the number of children, 9) current state of directors of kindergartens attached to the elementary school. In addition, information on tuition fees and full day kindergartens is included according to their need.

### **5.1.2. Statistics on childcare**

Statistics on Childcare is provided by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and is available on the Internet for free access. The investigated items include 1) annual establishment of childcare facilities, 2) annual number of children enrolled in childcare, 3) current state of government support for children of low income families, 4) the number of childcare facilities in nation wide, 5) the number of children enrolled in childcare nation wide, 6) the number of special childcare facilities, 7) the number of childcare facilities at workplace, 8) the number of childcare staff by the types of facilities, 9) the number of childcare staff by status, and 10) current state of childcare information centers.

### **5.1.3. The development of early childhood education indicators**

As shown above, statistics on early childhood education and care in Korea present two separate sets of information on the investigated items and indicators. Hence, data collection and analysis are conducted accordingly. This creates difficulties in obtaining comprehensive and integrated statistics on early childhood education and care in Korea. In order to resolve the difficulties, Na, J. et al. (2001) developed indicators on early childhood education and

care, and suggested investigating and analyzing indicators in an integrated way. She developed indicators into 4 categories with 14 sub-categories by applying the system approach model. The indicators by category are listed below:

- I. Input :
  - 1. Human resource: 1.1. children, 1.2. teachers
  - 2. Physical environment: 2.1. institutions/ classes, 2.2. space
  - 3. Finance: 3.1. public funding, 3.2 private funding
- II. Process :
  - 4. Curriculum implementation:
    - 4.1. educational content, 4.2. educational methods
  - 5. Management of institutions
  - 6. Administration guidance
- III. Output:
  - 7. Effects on children: 7.1. opportunities for education, 7.2. development, 7.3. safety & adaptation
  - 8. Effects on teachers :
    - 8.1. employment, 8.2. salaries, 8.3. satisfaction
  - 9. Effects on families
  - 10. Effects on society
- IV. Backgrounds:
  - 11. Family background
  - 12. The population structure
  - 13. Recognition of early childhood education and care
  - 14. Country background

## **5.2. The Government-Supported Research**

Research on early childhood education and care funded by the government has been conducted mostly by Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs (KIHSA), and Korea Women's Development Institute (KWDI). KEDI usually conducts research on early childhood education linked to the MOE while KIHSA and KWDI conduct research on childcare in collaboration with MOHW and MOGE.

### 5.2.1. Reserch conducted by National Research Institutes

KEDI, founded in 1972, is a representative research institute for educational policy. The purpose of KEDI is to contribute to the development of Korean education. The institute conducts comprehensive and scientific research on objectives, contents, methods of education in the pursuit of creation of new Korean education. It also develops innovative educational systems to resolve educational problems that Korea faces. Studies in the field of early childhood education carried out recently include collaborative studies with international organizations, studies on institutionalizing early childhood education as public schooling, studies on the program development, and so on.

<Table 5-1> List of ECEC Research Projects Conducted by KEDI

Year	Title of Study
2002	Establishing the Committee and Plans of Kindergarten Operation
2001	Development of indicators for early childhood education/ Developing Tests for Infant and Young Children and Analyzing Developmental Levels
2000	Plans for Prioritizing Regions for Early Childhood Education Investment/ Analysis of Early Childhood Education and Care Policy and Systems in OECD countries/ Analysis on Educational Effects of Different Early Childhood Education Institutions/ The Development of the Preschool Model/ Establishing Early Childhood Education Evaluation Models/ Plans of Reorganizing Regulations and Laws of Early Childhood Education
1999	Plans of the Development of Early Childhood Education in Vietnam and Mongolia (Collaborative research of UNESCO & KEDI)/ The KEDI-UNESCO Programme on Early Childhood and Family Education/ Developing Kindergarten Evaluation System toward Institutionalized Public Early Childhood Education
1998	Improving Teacher Training in Early Childhood Education/Promoting Early Childhood Education in Mongolia and Vietnam: Policy Recommendations for Creating a Private Kindergarten System
1997	Study on the Plan for the Institutionalization of the Preschool System/ Establishment of an Institutional Evaluation System for Private Kindergartens (IESPK) in Korea/ Strategies for Enhancing Educational Continuity Between Preschool and Elementary School/ Development of Play-Oriented Physical Activity Programs for Preschoolers: Phase

KIHSA was established in 1970 as the Korea Family Planning Research Institute in order to contribute to policy making in national health, medicine, and welfare in the short- and long-term. Thus, KIHSA conducts research on national health and medicine, social

welfare, social security, as well as other related projects. This institute also carries out activities to create popular consensus for and understanding of important national policies. The related studies conducted by KIHSA are concentrated on childcare evaluation or concerning quality improvement of childcare in Korea.

<Table 5-2> List of ECEC Research Projects Conducted by KIHSA

Year	Title of Study
2002	The Current State of Profit-oriented Childcare and Policy Tasks: Focusing on Babysitters/ Investigating the Current State of Childcare in nation wide/ Evaluation of Childcare: Focusing on supports of types of facilities/ Evaluation of Unit Cost of Childcare
2001	The Current State of Childcare for Children with Special Needs/ Availability of Kindergartens and Childcare Facilities in the City, County, and District/ Evaluation of Childcare Fee Supports/ Improving National and Public Childcare Facilities
2000	Analysis on Childcare Services for Infants and Young Children and Establishment of Comprehensive Plan of Childcare Development/ Plans of Improving the Quality of Childcare/ Adopting Accreditation System to Evaluation of Childcare Facilities
1999	Evaluation of Childcare in KyungKi-Do/ Evaluation of Childcare Loans/ The Current State & Policy Tasks of Childcare in the Economic Crisis
1996-1998	Evaluation of Three Year Expansion Plans of Childcare/ Childcare Demands by Regions and Policy Plans/ The Current State of Childcare Policies and Policy Plans

KWDI was founded in 1983 in order to conduct research on general issues of Korean women, to develop related policies, and to provide women with relevant information. The ultimate purpose of KWDI is to promote women's social participation and welfare toward the development of Korean women. Many research projects on childcare came to be conducted by KWDI recently and these are focused on program development and planning.

<Table 5-3> List of ECEC Research Projects Conducted by KWDI

Year	Title of Study
2002	Diversifying Childcare Services and Establishing Childcare Infra Structure/ Establishing Comprehensive Plans of Childcare Policy/ Developing Basic Plans of Childcare Development
2000	Program Development for Gender Equality in Preschool Children
1998	Improving the Quality of Childcare Services
1995-1997	Developing In-service Childcare Teacher Training Programs/Analysis on Sex-Role Teaching and Learning Processes in Early Childhood Education Institutions

### 5.2.2. Research Supported by MOE and MOHW

In addition to studies conducted by the national research institutes, there are policy research projects supported by MOE or MOHW. These research projects are focused on policies as well as on program and material development and are usually undertaken by university professors. The research projects funded by MOE and MOHW are given below.

<Table 5-4> List of ECEC Research Projects Supported by MOE

Year	Title of Study
2002	Improving Management of Private Kindergartens in preparation of Institutionalized Public Kindergarten Education/ Analysis on Early Childhood Education and Childcare System in Korea/ Teacher Awareness and Expectations of Kindergarten and Childcare Policies: Comparing the cases of Korea, Japan, and China/ Development of Early Childhood Science Programs/ Parent Education Development
2001	Establishing Plans of Developing and Managing National Human Resources in Early Childhood/ Plans of Prioritizing Regions for Investment to Early Childhood Education/ Investigations on Kindergarten Meals and Developing Effective Ways of Meal Provision/ Innovating Early Childhood Education to Foster Creative and All-around Human Resources/ Developing Teaching Materials of Unification Education for Young Children/ Developing Materials for Activities for Parents and Children
2000	Development of the Preschool Model/ Plans of Establishing Early Childhood Education Evaluation Models/ Developing Teaching Materials for Safety Education/ Developing Full Day Kindergarten Programs/ Developing Activities for Fostering Social Competence in Young Children/ Developing Materials for Training of Teaching Aids and Volunteers
1999	Developing Kindergarten Evaluation System toward Institutionalized Public Early Childhood Education/ Developing Materials of Traditional Cultural Activities for Young Children/
1998	Developing Activities for Fostering Children's Prosocial Behaviors/ Developing Educational Activities for Globalization of Young Children/ Developing Educational Activities for Building Basic Life Habits in Young Children

<Table 5-5> List of ECEC Research Projects Supported by MOHW

Year	Title of Study
2002	Plans of Childcare Promotion/ Promoting Childcare of Extended Hours/ Establishing a Prohibition System of Dual Registration for Free Education/ Institutionalizing After-school Programs/ Plans of Expanding Childcare Facilities for Children with Special Needs
2001	Developing the Standardized Childcare Curriculum/ Developing Extra-Curricular Programs/ Current State of Profitable Childcare and Policy Tasks/ Improving the Quality of Childcare Based on Investigation of Work Environment/ Evaluation of Childcare
2000	Developing Health Programs for Young Children/ Sharing Roles Between Kindergartens and Childcare Facilities/ Developing Outdoor Activities by Using Community Resources/ Improving the Kindergarten and Childcare Facility Management
1999	Developing Programs for Night and 24 Hours Childcare/ Programs for The Development of Children's Creativity/ Programs for Managing and Operating Childcare Facilities by Facility Types/ In-service and Promotion Training of Child Caregivers
1998	Developing Infant Programs/ Developing Parent Involvement Programs/ Developing Childcare Programs for Children with Special Needs/ Evaluation of Expansion of Childcare Facilities for the Three Years

### 5.2.3. Evaluating the quality of research

Research projects conducted by the national research institutes must go through a set of review procedures to ensure research quality. There are reviews at the planning and intermediate stages of the research and a final evaluation upon the completion of the research report. National research institutes are evaluated by the upper level institute with respect to the quality of their research. In other words, the research projects undertaken in national research institutes are thoroughly evaluated and supervised.

Special research projects by individual ministries are first reviewed by the officers in charge of the project. The superior officers, then, review the project with the officer in charge and the researchers. Research projects of low quality lead to disadvantages for the involved researchers in applying for research projects in the future.



# VI Conclusion



# VI Conclusion

## 6.1. Successful cases of ECEC Reform

### 6.1.1. Expansion of childcare facilities

The government promoted the ‘The 3-year Plan for Expansion of Childcare Facilities (1995-1997)’ under the leadership of MOHW as the demands of childcare increased rapidly after the establishment of the *Childcare Act*. The government invested 13 billion won(\$10,833,333) in childcare facilities and the number of childcare facilities increased dramatically as a result. Along with the quantity increase of childcare facilities, efforts have been made to improve the quality of childcare services since 1995. Currently, childcare policies are striving to reflect needs of the clients as well as to achieve a balance between the expansion of facilities and the improvement of service quality. A high priority is given to childcare policies, due to the strong will of the government to develop women resources for national competitiveness.

### 6.1.2. Provision of free education and care for 5-year-olds.

Free education and care for 5-year-old children began to be provided in 1999 although it had already been legislated in the *Early Childhood Education Promotion Act* as well as in the *Childcare Act* of 1997. Due to the national economic crisis right after legislation, undertaking free education and care for five-year-olds was delayed. Provision of free education and care is limited to the five-year-old children of low income families at the moment, but this benefit will be gradually extended to all children.

Free education and care for five-year-olds has important bearings on several accounts: First of all, the concept of public ECEC has been adapted to Korean ECEC, which relies heavily on the private sector. In addition, the children of low income families are given



priority for free education and care in order to realize equal educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. By adopting the voucher system, parents become able to choose ECEC institutions for their children, and the ECEC institutions are designated as recipients of vouchers.

## 6.2. Policy Trends: Discussions on ECEC system reform

Discussions on ECEC system reform started in 1997 when the Presidential Commission on Educational Reform addressed how to include early childhood education in institutionalized public educational systems (Commission on Educational Reform, 1997). For the purpose of ECEC reform, three plans were proposed: establishing the preschool system, ensuring children's right for education by providing one year of free education before entering elementary school, and establishing a preparation system for reforms. The reform plan also included a provision stipulating that the MOE would take charge of education and care for children age from three to five through the establishment of the Preschool system.

As childcare related organizations and the MOHW were strongly against the ECEC reform plan, the Commission on Educational Reform came to entrust the reform promotion plan to a special reform committee established in the Office of Government Policy Coordination under the Prime Minister. After several discussions, the MOE and the MOHW as well as kindergartens and childcare facilities came to reach agreement in December 1997. Both agreed to convert kindergartens into preschools first and maintain the current dual system of ECEC until clients demand a unified system.

The ECEC system reform was included in the election pledges of President Kim, Dae Jung in 1998 and was submitted to the Assembly three times from 1997 to 2000. Nonetheless, the *Early Childhood Education Act* has not been passed regardless of agreements such as converting kindergartens into Preschools. The government of President Kim declared a welfare state, established a Ministry of Gender Equality, and carried out policies to promote women's social participation. In this context, childcare policies and development came to draw intensive attention from the government.

### 6.3. Prospects

The 12th Conference on Human Resources Development, a council of ministers related to human resources, was held in October 2002. In the conference, there was a consensus on the need to establish policy plans for ECEC based on nation-wide support as well as to prepare plans at the inter-ministerial level. Despite early childhood education and care creating a foundation for the development of human resources in the future as well as the base of the nation, sharing of roles between the government and the market is unclear and weak links and collaboration among the ministries cause ineffective administration and financing. In addition, ECEC services do not meet parental needs.

Therefore, ten ministries including MOE, MOHW, MOGE formed the ‘Special Steering Committee on the Development of Early Childhood Education and Care’ and undertook inter-ministerial policy research to establish plans. National institute researchers in the field of early childhood education, childcare, and finance were involved in the inter-ministerial policy research. The researchers proposed plans for the development of ECEC and reported the estimation of finance in February 2003.

The key contents of the research report include realizing equal educational opportunity for the disadvantaged classes, completing free education and care for five-year-old children, promoting women’s social participation by lessening the burden of childrearing, reconsidering clients’ needs and satisfaction, reorganizing ECEC system, obtaining enough finance, and so on.

This project has significance in that officials in various ministries and researchers related to ECEC undertook the research collaboratively. This collaborative research brought the expectations and prospects that ‘early childhood education’ and ‘childcare’ can develop together leaving the previous conflicts behind. ‘Education’ and ‘care’ for young children are taking their first steps together, hand in hand for the first time.



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